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UNITY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS, No. XXIV.

Fourth Year in a Six Years' Study of Religion.

24

THE FLOWERING

OF THE

HEBREW RELIGION

BY

REV. W. W. FENN

SECOND EDITION

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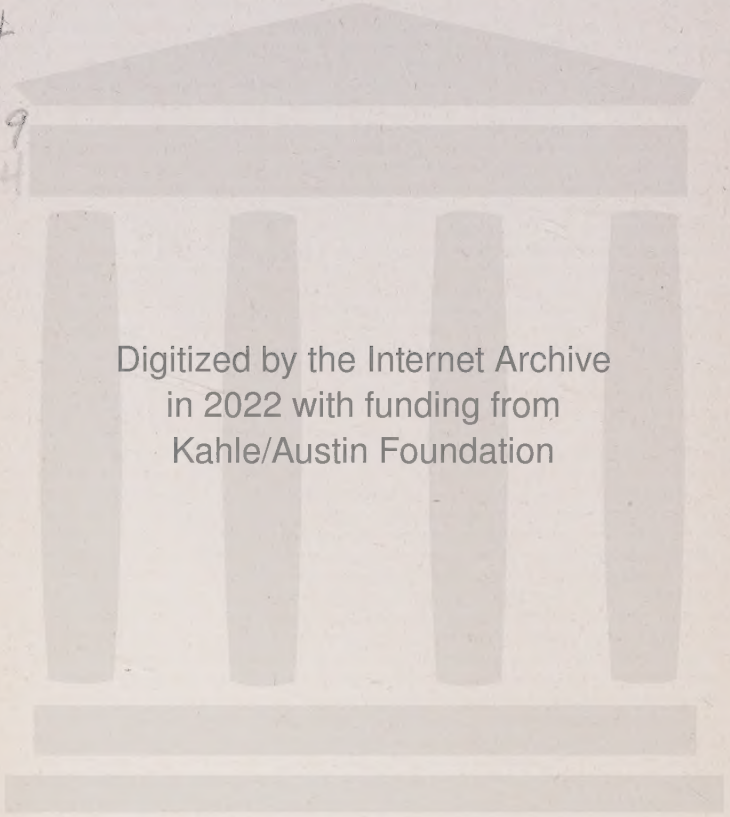

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THE FOURTH YEAR

OF

A SIX YEARS' STUDY OF RELIGION

THE FLOWERING OF THE HEBREW RELIGION

INTRODUCTORY

In the New Testament lessons for this year three things will be attempted: First, to study a few good pictures; second, to present by the pictures, arranged in chronological order, the chief events in New Testament history; third, to show, by the aid of the pictures, leading New Testament ideas, which may be regarded as the flowering of the Hebrew religion. The pictures selected are the following:

1. THE HOLY NIGHT.....*Correggio*
2. IN NAZARETH.....*Hofmann*
3. JESUS IN THE TEMPLE....*Hofmann*
4. THE BAPTISM.....*Dore*
5. THE TEMPTATION.....*Cornecelius*
6. THE SOWER.....*Millet*
7. CHRIST PREACHING FROM A BOAT, *Hofmann*
8. THE GOOD SAMARITAN.....*Henner*
9. JESUS AND THE SINNER...*Hofmann*
10. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.....*Jacques*
11. JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.*Hofmann*
12. THE TRANSFIGURATION....*Raphael*
13. PURIFYING THE TEMPLE..*Hofmann*
14. THE LAST SUPPER. *Leonardo da Vinci*
15. ECCO HOMO.....*Rembrandt*
16. THE CRUCIFIXION..*Michael Angelo*
17. EASTER MORNING.....*Plochhorst*
18. THE PRESENT CHRIST....*Hofmann*
19. DEATH OF ANANIAS.....*Raphael*
20. PREACHING OF STEPHEN. *Fra Angelico*
21. PAUL PREACHING IN ATHENS. *Raphael*
22. CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR....*Scheffer*

The following books will be found useful in the lessons for this year:

1. First, and foremost, the Revised Version of the New Testament.
2. Life of Our Lord in Art.....*Mrs. Jameson*
3. The Apocryphal Gospels.....*B. H. Cowper*
4. The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ.....*Schuerer*
   Especially Div. II., Vols. 1 and 2.
5. The Gospel and Its Earliest Interpretations *Orello Cone*
6. Organization of the Early Christian Church *Hatch*
7. Influence of Greek Ideas Upon Christianity *Hatch*

For a verse-by-verse commentary none is more likely to prove serviceable than "Broadus' Commentary on Matthew," issued by the Baptist Publication Society. Other books whose use may be presupposed are not mentioned.

LESSON I.—The Birth Stories.

Still the angels sing on high,
Still the bearded men draw nigh,
Bringing worship with the morn,
When a little child is born;
Baby-glory in the place,
Star-look on the mother's face,
Psalm within the mother's heart,
Christmas all in counterpart.

W. C. Gannett.

Picture—The Holy Night, by Correggio, [1494-1534]. The Picture shows nearly all the details that are mentioned in the Golden Verse.

"The angels sing on high." The reference in the poem is to the song which the shepherds heard as they watched their flocks (Luke ii. 8-14). The picture has the same idea, that angels were interested in the birth of Jesus.

"The bearded men draw nigh." In the Matthew account there has been preserved a legend that three Magi, or wise men, astrologers, from the far East, came all the way to Palestine to worship the child of Joseph and Mary (Mat. ii. 1-12). The bearded man in our picture, however, is one of the shepherds who has come, with the younger man at his side, to see the child of whom the angels sang. Our hearts warm to the artist who shows us the shepherd-dog that has accompanied his master and shares in the light streaming from the child.

"Baby-glory in the place." Except the cloud of light about the angels and the suggestion of day on the distant hills, all the light in the picture comes from the babe in Mary's arms. In the Apocryphal Gospels, from which many of the older painters derived the details of their pictures, it is said that the cave in which Jesus was born, although it could not receive the light of day, was "filled with lights more beautiful than the glittering of lamps and candles and brighter than the light of the sun." (Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, ch. iii). The "star-look on the mother's face" is shown poorly in the picture (read, however, Gannett's poem "Recognition"), and the "psalm within the mother's heart" refers probably to the song which is said to have been on her lips when she visited her kinswoman Elisabeth (Lk. i. 46-55). And the best of all is that whatever was true of Jesus might have been true of every child that has ever been born, and has been true of a great many—"Christmas all in counterpart."

We notice in the picture also that in the background Joseph is represented holding an ass, and in the further background are two persons, one of whom is grasping the horn of an ox. These two animals—the ox and the ass—are found in most of the early pictures of the birth of Jesus, because some of the traditions, preserved in the Apocryphal Gospels, find in Isaiah i. 3, and in Habakkuk iii. 2 (where the Septuagint reads "in the midst of two lives," that is, of two living creatures), a prophecy of the Messiah. The ass is said to represent the Gentiles, and the ox the Jews, hence it may be that Correggio has represented the ass as trying to look toward Jesus, but pulled away by Joseph, while in the distance the two figures that cannot be clearly made out are endeavoring to make the ox raise his head that he may see the "baby-glory in the place."

The young woman who is shading her eyes as if dazzled by the brilliancy, has a basket in which are two doves. The dove is often associated with Mary as a symbol of her character, but since two are depicted here, the probability is that reference is made to the offering in Luke ii. 24. That Mary is represented as in full health and vigor so soon after the birth of her child is due to a theological prejudice which deemed it "little less than heretical to portray Mary reclining on a couch as one exhausted by the pains of childbirth." (Mrs. Jameson's Legends of the Madonna, Pt. II., Sec. 7). The rim of light on the horizon betokens that for the world "the night is far spent, the day is at hand."

When was Jesus born?—In the last years of Herod the Great, who died about 4 B. C.—Our common chronology dates the birth of Jesus at least four years too late.

That Jesus was put to death during the administration of Pilate (26-36 A. D.) is certain, but the date of his birth cannot be ascertained with any approach to certainty. According to Matthew's account he was born just

before the death of Herod. Josephus states that Herod died shortly after the burning of Matthias, an insurgent, on the night after whose execution there was an eclipse of the moon (Antiqq. xvii. 6, 4), and also that Herod's death was immediately before a Passover. Astronomers say that the eclipse must have occurred on the night of March 12-13, B. C. 4, and consequently Herod must have died between that date and the Passover (March-April) of the same year. If, then, Herod died in the spring of B. C. 4 and Jesus was born before the death of Herod, we have a fixed date later than which the birth cannot have occurred.

Luke seems to give more chronological data. He puts the birth of Jesus at the time of a certain taxing by Quirinius, governor of Syria. In this, however, he contradicts Matthew, for at the time of Herod's death Varus was governor of Syria (B. C. 6-4) and Saturninus (B. C. 9-6) was his predecessor. Therefore, if Jesus was born just before the death of Herod, as Matthew relates, Luke must be in error in placing his birth while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Furthermore, from the silence of the Roman historians, the relation in which Judæa stood to Rome during Herod's lifetime, and particularly the fact that during the governorship of Quirinius (A. D. 69) a census was taken in Judæa, we may be sure that in this indication of time Luke has blundered. There was no Roman census under Quirinius till at least ten years after the death of Herod. That Luke did not think that Jesus was born so late as A. D. 6 appears from III. 1, in which John's baptism, at which time Jesus was about 30 years old, is assigned to the fifteenth year of Tiberius; that is, either 29 A. D. or, if we date the years of Tiberius from his association with the Augustus as colleague, and not from his succeeding to the throne, about 27 A. D.

The only chronological datum in John is in II. 20, where the Jews say that the temple has been forty-six years in building. The temple of which they spoke was begun about the year 20 B. C., and forty-six years would bring us to 26 A. D. But it may be that work was not then going on upon the temple, so that the forty-six years would have ended with the cessation of work, and we are not told how old Jesus himself was at the time of his first Passover. Hence the passage gives no certain note of time. On the whole, it may be said that Jesus was born probably not later than the spring of 4 B. C.

Where was Jesus born?—Probably in Nazareth, possibly in Bethlehem of Zebulon, a little town about six miles from Nazareth.

In the Gospels Jesus is spoken of as from Nazareth, and the natural inference from Jno. vii. 42, is that he was not born in Bethlehem of Judæa, the city of David. According to Matthew, his parents were residents of Bethlehem, who fled to Egypt soon after his birth, and after their return went to Nazareth instead of to their former home, because Archelaus was reigning in Judæa. Luke, however, supposes that Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth and came to Bethlehem on account of a census which actually did not occur. It was expected that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judæa, hence, it was natural that those who supposed Jesus to be the Messiah should think that he must have fulfilled expectation in the place of his birth as in other respects—hence the appropriateness of the Bethlehem legend. Since there was a little town named Bethlehem only a few miles from Nazareth, it may be that Jesus was born there, and that, partly through ignorance and partly by the influence of the Messianic prophecy, the two Bethlehems were confounded.

In the class, the birth stories and poems in Matthew and Luke should be read as legends and poems. Some of the apocryphal stories should also be read (they can be found in "The Apocryphal Gospels," B. H. Cowper, London) and the prodigies attending the birth of other heroes of antiquity should be referred to. Above all, it should be made clear that a sense of poetic fitness and a desire to find in Jesus a perfect fulfillment of all the prophecies supposed to relate to the Messiah have done much to modify and color the actual facts.

QUESTIONS.

Can you find in the picture the details mentioned in the Golden Verse? The picture shows three sources of light—can you find them? What animals do you see in the picture—what is the significance of each? Did Correggio use any stories about Jesus besides those found in our Gospels? Why did

the artist paint Mary as looking straight at Jesus, while others are dazzled by the light that is about him? Do you know "Mary's Cradle Song" (Carol, p. 44)?

When and how was the date of the birth of Jesus fixed as a starting point for our chronology? Can we find out just when Jesus was born? Do Matthew and Luke agree about it? Do they agree about the place of his birth? How may the Bethlehem story have arisen? Is it more or less likely to be true than the Nazareth story? Are wonderful stories told about the birth of other great men than Jesus? How do all such stories spring up? Is it right for us to use Christmas pictures, poems, or carols which are not true to the fact?

LESSON II.—The Home Environment of Jesus.

Is not this the carpenter's son?
Matt. xiii, 55.

I must be about my father's business.
Lk. ii, 49.

"In light things
Prove thou the arms thou long'st to glorify,
Nor fear to work up from the lowest ranks
Whence came great Nature's captains."
Arthur Hugh Clough.

Picture—"In Nazareth," by Heinrich Hofman (1824—).

Who were the parents of Jesus?—Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, and Mary, his wife.

In the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke we have traditions which relate a miraculous birth of Jesus. That Mary was his mother all accounts agree, but the legends referred to declare that he had no human father, but was begotten by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. These accounts must be rejected, however, for reasons which may be briefly stated.

(a) Inherent improbability. A miracle has been defined as something which no one would believe if it were not in the Bible. When similar stories are told of other great heroes and religious leaders,—of the Buddha, for instance,—we never think of believing them, simply because they are so improbable. Why, then, should we believe such a story when told of our religious leader? Is there evidence enough in favor of the account to overcome its inherent improbability?

(b) There is no clear intimation of the miraculous birth anywhere else in the New Testament. Jesus is called the son of Joseph, and Mary says, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

(c) The genealogies given in Matthew and Luke contradict the accounts of the virginal birth, for they prove the Davidic lineage of Jesus by tracing descent through Joseph. But if Joseph was not the father of Jesus how could his descent from David prove that Jesus was son of David?

(d) It is possible to see how the story arose in the case of Jesus.

(1) There was a growing tendency among those who believed him the Messiah to lift him out of the ranks of humanity, to ascribe to him pre-existence and supernatural origin. Hence, there was a natural disposition to think that his coming into the earthly life must have differed from that of other men. The same laws of legend-making governed the traditions about Jesus that were operative in the case of Buddha.

(2) This tendency was aided also by the misinterpretation of a passage in Isaiah (vii. 14, quoted in Matt. i. 23) concerning which Prof. Toy says: "The rendering 'virgin' is inadmissible." [The Septuagint mistranslated the Hebrew word.] Our passage occurs in the section Isa. vii. 1—ix. 7, which belongs to the period of the Syro-Israelitish invasion (about B. C. 734). During the war, when the royal house of David was trembling with apprehension, Isaiah goes to King Ahaz, announces that the hostile combination [between Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria] will fail, and exhorts the King to ask a sign from Yahwe. This Ahaz refuses to do, and the prophet then declares that Yahwe will nevertheless give him a sign: The yonng woman shall bear a son; and before the child shall reach years of discretion the land of the hostile kings shall be deserted." Clearly that could be no sign to Ahaz in 734 which did not come to pass till B. C. 4. This passage in Isaiah doubtless commended the story of the virginal birth to Jewish Christians (although there were some of them who never accepted it), but the

Jewish ideals of God and of womanhood seem to make it impossible that such a belief should have sprung up out of Jewish soil. We must seek its origin elsewhere.

(3) The idea probably grew up among the Gentile Christians. Jesus called himself Son of God in exactly the same sense that he taught his disciples to pray "Our Father." The Greeks, too, had their heroes who were sons of God, children, that is, of a god and a mortal, demi-gods. Thus it was easy when they heard of the exalted, mysteriously supernatural Christ, who was called Son of God, to think of him as like one of their own heroes. In some such way as this, probably, the story of the virginal birth arose.

It is clear, therefore, that we have no reason for accepting this story of the miraculous birth of Jesus. The whole account must be rejected. There is no reason to doubt that Jesus was the first, and lawful, son of Joseph and Mary.

What do we know about his home life?—His father and mother were poor working people. He had four brothers whose names are given as James, Joseph, Judas and Simon, and at least two sisters.

The picture shows us the sort of house in which Jesus may have lived. Limestone was abundant, and the houses when built of stone were white or grayish, as portrayed in the picture. We see no windows, only the opening of the door. Doves were often found about Jewish houses. The hen with her chickens, together with the shape of the cross into which the square and rule that Jesus is carrying have accidentally fallen, suggests his lament over Jerusalem (Mt. xxiii. 37). Joseph and Mary are both at work. Joseph was a carpenter, and if the accounts in the Apocrypha have any basis of fact, he was not a skillful workman. In the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy (ch. xxxviii.) it is written:

> Now Joseph went about through all the city and took with him the Lord Jesus, since men sent to him on account of his craft, to make for them doors and milk-pails and couches and boxes. And the Lord Jesus was with him wherever he went. Therefore so often as Joseph had to make any of his work a cubit or a span larger or shorter, wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus used to stretch out his hand toward it, and when this was done it became such as Joseph wished, and there was no need for him to do anything with his own hand, for Joseph was not very skillful as a carpenter.

In the apocryphal gospel, Mary is represented as very skillful in woolwork, and this tradition Hofmann has followed in the picture (*cf.*, *e. g.*, gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, chap. vi.). All the family are at work.

With the exception of James, who became prominent in the church at Jerusalem, although having none of his brother's genius, we know nothing of the other children besides Jesus. The sisters have been given various names by different writers. Among the names found are Anna, Esther, Lydia, Mary, Salome, Thamar.

In what sort of town did Jesus live?—Nazareth was a town of bad reputation and character, but the neighborhood was rich in historical and poetic associations.

If we could look over the wall seen in the background of the picture, near which trees, shrubbery, and a single flower are growing, we should have a view of the village of Nazareth. The town was on the side of a hill (*cf.* Luke iv. 29), not far from the caravan road between Egypt and Syria. Although it had a bad reputation (John i. 46), which the treatment accorded Jesus by his townsmen seems to justify (Luke iv. 28), it was in a region which, next to the country about Jerusalem, was the richest part of Palestine in history and poetry. Near by was the plain of Jezreel, where the battle bow of Israel was often bent and sometimes broken. Through the plain flowed the ancient river, the river Kishon which swept away the hosts of Sisera (Judges v.); not far off was Carmel, where Elijah had put to shame the priests of Baal. The boy Jesus walked over historic ground. But his immediate surroundings were commonplace; he made no disciples in Nazareth, and even the members of his own family did not believe in him. So he was thrown back upon himself and upon God.

In teaching this lesson constant reference should be made to Gannett's admirable "Childhood of Jesus." It is well to lay stress upon the fact that there came out of Palestine despised by the Romans, out of Galilee despised by Judæans, out of Nazareth despised by Galileans, a young man who, with everything against him, and in spite of the tyranny of environment, has become the great religious leader of the world. Besides the environment of Nazareth he was sensitive to the environment of God.

QUESTIONS.

What does this picture teach us about Joseph's trade, Mary's industry, Jesus' helpfulness? What is the meaning of the cross that Jesus is carrying? Is there any other prophetic hint of his future career? What kind of house did Jesus live in? Had he brothers and sisters? Were they like him?

In what town was this house of Joseph? Do you suppose your father would like to have you grow up in such a town? What could Jesus see from the Nazareth hills if he looked north, south, east, west? Were there any stories about these places? Where would Jesus hear them?

Do we believe what the Bible says about the wonderful birth of Jesus? Why not? Do Christians believe what the Buddhists say about the birth of Buddha? Why not?

LESSON III.—The Church Environment of Jesus.

Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Luke xii. 57.

Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

* * *

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

* * *

Come forth and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

Wordsworth.

Picture: Christ Disputing with the Doctors. By Heinrich Hofmann (1824—).

Another picture, by Hofmann, of Jesus in the Temple is more familiar than this, but the conceptions of the two are radically different. In the more popular portrait Jesus is pointing to an open book; in this the Scribe alone is referring to the book as authority. The one shows an appeal to the book, the other an appeal from the book. Therefore this picture alone is true to the method and thought of Jesus.

To what did the Jews appeal as final authority?—To the Old Testament substantially as we have it; particularly to its first five books, the Torah, and the interpretations which the teachers had put upon them.

This picture is true to the fact by showing us the Jews as "the people of the book." While the Jews were in captivity it became clear to them that their God had allowed them to be punished so severely because they had not kept his laws. Consequently they resolved, on their return to Palestine, to keep his laws strictly that similar evil might not befall them again. His laws were contained in the five books of Moses, which became therefore the rule of conduct to be received without question and obeyed to the very letter. Fearing to break the law inadvertently, they "built a hedge" about it by even more rigorous enactments, that they might be on the safe side. If, for instance, the law said that forty stripes and no more might be given a criminal, it was ordained that only thirty-nine should be given, lest one might be missed in the count and so the legal number accidentally exceeded. Thus the Law with the interpretations and refinements put upon it by the scribes became a yoke which, so far from helping men bear their own burdens, was itself too heavy to be borne. The result was "an incredible externalizing of the moral and religious life." The letter killed free, spontaneous thought and conduct, the inner motives of morality were insignificant compared with conformity to an external standard, and the thinking of to-day was stifled by the thought of yesterday.

What education did Jesus have?—In the synagogue and perhaps also in school he had training in the law, but his real education was by observation of nature and human life.

Whether or not Jesus attended what we should call a day school cannot be told for certain. If he did, it was held in the synagogue, and there was no instruction save in the law. Yet in the synagogues he heard the law and the

prophets read, and both there and in the streets of Nazareth listened to discussions upon the letter of Scripture. That he studied nature as a sharp, clear-eyed observer, appears from his parables, all of which are realistic in the best sense of the word. Moreover, it was not far to the great caravan road, and he may often have seen and talked with the merchants and travelers from other lands than Palestine. Most important of all, however, were his visits to Jerusalem. At the great festival seasons the city was thronged with visitors from all parts of the world, the atmosphere was electric with patriotic feeling, the habits and thoughts of the East and the West met in Jerusalem at Passover time. We can easily imagine Jesus the young man, with those marvelous perceptive powers and that mental receptivity which from the parables we know were his, moving about among the crowds, almost breathing in ideas. The hills of Galilee, the streets of Nazareth and of Jerusalem (especially at Passover time), were his chief school rooms.

Upon what authority did Jesus rely?

—He trusted Nature, human thoughts and feelings, as revelations of God.

With Jesus, as with every man whose thoughts profoundly affect the world, the method of his thinking is vastly more important than its results. While others distrusted their own intuitions and relied upon "the book," Jesus put confidence in the natural human instincts. "What man of you" —is the argument constantly employed. A good human father will find only pity in his heart when a prodigal child comes home in shame, and the Father in heaven is no less kind and merciful than a father on earth. Human relations reveal divine, and the divine treatment of men must also be human. If God makes his sun to rise upon evil and good alike, a son of God must be kind not only to the kindly but also to the unthankful and the evil. This is the method of Jesus. Even yet some of his followers have not grasped his method for they attribute to God purposes and feelings which they would condemn in a man as unjust and cruel. Whittier's

—"Nothing can be good in him
Which evil is in me"—

is a fatal principle to much of Christian theology. And still there is the appeal to the book, when men rest upon the Bible as a final court of appeal; yet the spirit that was in Jesus prompts an appeal from the book to the spirit that is in nature and in man. Trust thyself, says Emerson, every heart vibrates to that iron string.

Why did Jesus dare to trust himself?

—Because he felt that he was a child of God.

In the story preserved for us by Luke, which gave the subject of Hofmann's picture, it is related that Jesus spoke of God as his father. We find here, then, the nascent consciousness of that relation between man and God, which is a distinctive trait in the teaching of Jesus. The prophets had spoken of the nation, or the king representing the nation, as Son of God, and teachers before Jesus had declared the personal fatherhood of God, but it was Jesus who made the idea "current coin." And this belief is closely connected with his method. He trusted himself because he felt sure that he and God were kin. In the power of this belief he rose above the mental pettiness and moral fussiness which were all around him, and became an apostle of the free spirit. Because God is the God of nature and man is child of God, nature and man must be trusted as revelations of God.

In teaching this lesson, the attitude of the Jews towards the Law and its results in triviality and casuistry should be dwelt upon. For this purpose the 17th chapter of Geikie's "Life of Christ" is good, but there is nothing so valuable and authoritative as ss. 25—28 in Schuerer's "The Jewish People in the Time of Christ." The apocryphal accounts of Jesus as a schoolboy, which show his quick and thoughtful mind, are worth reading. See, especially, "The Gospel of Thomas." For a later development of the story of Jesus in the Temple, see the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy cc. 50-52. Especial emphasis, however, must be laid in this lesson upon the Method of Jesus, for we shall have no more important subject in the entire course.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Have you ever seen another picture by Hofmann which looks very much like this? Let us put the two pictures side by side and pick out resemblances and differences. Why is one picture better than the other for

our study? What is the scene of this picture? How far was Jesus from home? Why had he taken so long a journey? Do you see his father and mother in the picture? Where were they? Who are those men gathered about Jesus? What is the book to which one of them is pointing? Did ancient books look like the one in the picture? Have you ever seen the roll of the law in a Jewish synagogue?

The People of the Book.—These men are called doctors, or learned men. What were they wise about? Did they know anything about science, literature, history, art? What could they have learned from the Bible on these subjects? How had the Jews become people of the book?

Jesus the Student.—Do you suppose Jesus could tell these learned men anything they did not know? Had he ever been to school? The Jews once said: "How knoweth this man, never having learned?"—What were the school rooms of Jesus? Do you think Jesus would have been any wiser or better if he had had such education as could have been given him then in Palestine? Why are our schools better than any he could have attended? Do they help us understand better the "books" that Jesus studied?

The Method of Jesus.—What was it? Give illustrations from the Gospels of Jesus' use of this method. Think of some things he said and see if you can discover how he learned them. Men of the book and the child of nature,—can you give other historical instances of their opposition? Have you read the apocryphal account of this incident?

LESSON IV.—The Crisis of Consecration.

A holy purpose in his heart
Has deepened calm and still;
Now from his childhood's Nazareth,
He comes, to do thy will.

Samuel Longfellow.

Picture: The Baptism by John. Paul Gustave Dore (1833-1883).

This picture is the worst of the set, and perhaps should not be used at all.

Who was John the Baptist?—A young Jew of priestly family, possibly also a relative of Jesus, who by his preaching brought Jesus out to his life work.

Very little dependence can be placed upon the narrative in Luke about the infancy of John; the statement that Elizabeth, mother of John, and Mary, mother of Jesus, were kinswomen, finds no corroboration elsewhere, but may be true, nevertheless. It is not unlikely that his father was a priest: in that case it is significant that of the three great heroes of early Christianity, John was son of a priest, Jesus was son of a peasant, and Paul was son of a Pharisee. Each of the three great divisions of the people contributed its man.

It may be that John went first to live among the Essenes in the wilderness, but when he first comes prominently to view it is not as an Essene but as prophet and preacher of righteousness. It is not easy for us to judge John's work justly, for we think of him only as the herald of Jesus. Yet Josephus, who has but a single casual reference to Jesus, speaks of John as a good man, whose great influence over the people caused Herod to fear him and finally to put him to death, and says that a great defeat, which Herod met with soon afterward, was regarded by the people as a divine judgment upon his cruel treatment of the Baptizer (Antiq. xviii. 5, 2). In the Acts of the Apostles, also, we learn that over twenty years after his death there were men in Ephesus of Asia Minor who called themselves John's disciples. Clearly, therefore, John's movement was very important and powerful; but, after all, its greatest result was the bringing of Jesus to the front.

What was the substance of John's preaching?—He taught the people not to rely upon being Jews for salvation, still less upon meaningless forms, but to do justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

It is noteworthy that the gist of John's preaching as given by Luke falls under the three heads of the passage quoted from Micah vi. 8, and if the report were perfectly authentic we might

infer that the passage had been emphasized in his mind because, like the prophet, he, a priest's son, had turned away from the burnt offerings and rivers of oil which were offered as sacrifices well pleasing to God. He bids the publicans and soldiers do justly, he commands the multitudes to show that they love mercy by giving food and raiment to the poor, he charges those who pride themselves upon being children of Abraham to be rid of their arrogance and walk humbly with God. His preaching was at once ethical and universal. It was ethical because he did not urge the people to offer sacrifices or seek out new scruples of conscience. It was universal because it virtually denied the popular belief that the Jews were to be saved just because they were Jews, children of Abraham. He did not demand that the Roman soldiers should become Jewish proselytes, but only that they should deal justly. And this universality of his preaching seems to be disclosed in the rite with which he was so closely identified that he became known as John the Baptist.

What was the meaning of his baptism?—It was the symbol of personal consecration to a new life of purity and service.

Of course in Eastern countries, where lustrations are of so great religious importance, baptism can have been no novel rite. John, however, employed it as a form pledging the recipient to righteousness of life and promising remission of past sins. There seemed to be, however, an even deeper meaning than this. When proselytes were received into the Jewish community three things were required of them: circumcision, baptism, and a sacrifice. In Jewish thought, therefore, baptism was associated with the reception of proselytes. Can it be, then, that by calling both Jews and Gentiles to his baptism John was placing them on the same level, as being both outside the true Israel whose distinguishing note was righteousness? It may be that Luke, with his Pauline leanings, has described the teaching of John as more universal than it really was; but if we trust the record the natural conclusion would be that John had come to a broader view than Jesus had, at the beginning of his ministry, of the relations between Jew and Gentile, and that his baptism was a symbol of his faith.

To Jesus the preaching of John must have been a glad revelation. He, too, had been thinking that the religious leaders of the people were all astray in their teachings, that God could not care for tithings of anise and cumin, for meats and washings and ordinances so much as for justice and mercy, but there was no one to sympathize with him in Nazareth. But he hears now from human lips the words that have been whispered in his own heart, and he, too, joins the new prophet and by baptism consecrates himself to the work that John is doing.

The spectacular features of the narrative, the visible and audible signs, which, indeed, Luke alone represents as done in sight and hearing of all the people, may be dismissed as unhistorical. Neither is there sufficient ground to warrant us in supposing that John refused to baptize Jesus, recognizing in him a holier than himself, or that he acknowledged the peasant of Nazareth to be the Messiah of whom he was but messenger. It is written that Jesus began his life work by preaching as John had done,—Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

By repentance is meant a change of mind concerning the things that are pleasing to God and are worth striving for. The priest must see that justice is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the Pharisee must postpone his interminable discussions till he has fulfilled plain, straight-away righteousness. The multitudes must believe that mercy is more precious than money, that true hearts are more than sacrifice, and simple faith than Jewish blood. This was what Jesus and John meant by repentance: a readjustment of the scale of moral and religious values.

And the motive for this repentance is that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." With John that meant that the manifestation of God's hate of sin was imminent. In Amos the day of the Lord is represented as a day of darkness in which is no light, a day of wrath and vengeance, and John's figures of the ax lying at the root of the tree and the baptism of fire soon to come in which the chaff should be burned, prove that he urged the wrath to come as the motive for repentance. But from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry he discloses a nature totally unlike John's. He, too, urges repentance, but it is the blessedness of the kingdom of God which he emphasizes. With John, the motive is wrath and

terror; with Jesus it is love and opportunity. Precisely what Jesus meant by the kingdom of heaven we shall have to study later on. It is enough now to see that he, as well as John, believes that the fulfillment of Jewish hopes is near, that the Messiah is soon to appear, and that it is his duty to prepare the people by rousing them to lives of justice and mercy and humble walking with God.

It is a grievous descent to speak of the manner of baptism, but since the question may be asked it ought to be said that there is pretty general agreement that the method used was that of total immersion.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Who are the two men in the foreground? What has been the history of each up to the scene represented in the picture? Was there any relationship between them? What is the scene of the picture? What was Jesus doing there?

John the Baptizer.—John is reported to have said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease;" are the words true to the event? Why has John dropped out of sight so completely? Was he more or less conspicuous than Jesus in his lifetime?

The Baptism.—Was this an unusual rite? Does the picture give a true idea of the way in which John baptized? Do you suppose that the rite had the same significance to John, to Jesus and to the people? May not John have used it as a symbol of his prophetic message?

The Preaching of Repentance.—What did John teach? Had such teaching been heard before in Israel? Was it common in his time? Jesus called John—"a prophet and more than a prophet," and said, referring to his preaching, "Elijah is indeed come." What did he mean? What is repentance? What motive did John urge? Did Jesus press the same motive? What did the baptism mean to Jesus?

LESSON V.—The Temptation.

(MATT. IV. 1—11.)

What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?
Mark viii. 36 (A. V.).

He that feeds men serveth few,
He serves all who dares be true.
Emerson.

Picture: The Temptation of Jesus by Cornicelius (1825— ?)

How are we to understand this story of the temptation?—It is a parable in which Jesus made known to his disciples the decisive struggles of his spiritual life.

There was a tradition in the church that immediately after the baptism Jesus fled into the wilderness and there passed through a critical spiritual experience, which is called a temptation by Satan. That after such a consecration of himself as is implied by the baptism he should have chosen solitude is not unlikely; both John the Baptist and Paul had it out with themselves in the wilderness, the Buddha won his battle alone, and Mahomet was called to be a prophet during his lonely meditations on Mt. Hira. Besides, the lack of sympathy among his own people had driven Jesus back upon himself, and, even in the Gospels, we learn that he was in the habit of spending whole nights in prayer alone, upon the mountains or on the lake shore, a habit which he must have formed in young manhood. In the words of Gibbon, solitude is the school of genius. It is probable, too, that toward the close of his stay in the wilderness, or uninhabited region, of Judea, there came a revulsion from the intense spiritual excitement into which he had been thrown by the scenes about Jordan. If Jesus was like other men, and of course he was, the clear certainties and high resolves of the "valley of decision" must have been succeeded by a period of depression and irresolution. That mental strain should have made him insensible to bodily needs is psychologically likely, and that, as relaxation came, the idea of proving his prophetic mission by turning the stones of the wilderness, whose very shape suggested loaves, into bread to satisfy his hunger, should have presented itself as

a temptation of Satan, is not incredible. Yet mention of the pinnacle and the temple, of the exceeding high mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world are visible, and perhaps also of Satan (although Jesus evidently believed in a personal devil as stoutly as Luther, who even thought that he saw him at Wartburg), seems to lift the narrative incontestably out of the realm of actual fact. Shall we say, then, that this story is merely a fancy of the disciples of Jesus? Hardly that: for, in the first place, as the tendency was to exalt Jesus out of the ranks of manhood, there would be increasing dislike to the very idea that he could be tempted at all, and we see that in the Fourth Gospel every trace of human weakness and liability to error has been rubbed out of the picture given by the Synoptists; and, in the second place, the account itself has too much psychologic truth and corresponds too closely to what we know of the growing life-experience of Jesus to warrant us in regarding it as a pure creation of his disciples' fancy. It is better, therefore, to regard it as one of the parables of Jesus, a personal parable, in which he tried to tell his disciples something of the conflict of his inner life. There are other instances in the Gospel story where an unmistakable parable of Jesus has been translated by his followers into an event.

What is the meaning of the first temptation?—Jesus was tempted to give his physical needs the first place and to use his powers for his own advantage.

The life of Jesus has been sometimes divided into four periods: The early years of poverty in Nazareth, the year of obscurity as a preacher of righteousness, the year of popular favor, and, finally, the year of conflict ending on Calvary. *Singularly, the three temptations, as given by Matthew, correspond precisely to the first three of these life-periods.* What must have been his chief temptation during those years of poverty and toil in his village home? Times were hard in Galilee, there was a large family to support, Joseph was dead and Jesus, the oldest son, bore the heaviest responsibility for the support of all, and there can be no doubt that now and then even Mary was troubled because Jesus was such a dreamer and perhaps because his strict sense of honor would not allow him to do what other workmen did for larger gains. But Jesus knew that there is something in man which bread cannot satisfy, and was resolved that all his thought and energy should not be absorbed in bread-winning and money-making. The three Old Testament passages with which Jesus is related to have met the solicitations of the tempter represent three thoughts which dominated and saved him in three successive epochs of his life. From the peril of the workman who is tempted to make his physical needs of first concern and to lose himself in the absorbing routine of daily toil, using all his powers for himself alone, Jesus was delivered by a profound conviction of the truth that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

What is the meaning of the second temptation? Jesus was tempted to reassure himself and to hasten the success of his mission by an appeal to miracles.

The best illustration of this temptation is given by the following passage from Mark (viii. 11, 12):

> And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

To be sure, according to the chronology of the evangelists, this incident must be placed in the period of popular favor, but the temptation which it describes must have been present to Jesus in even greater force during the period of obscurity. He had not the dramatic personality of John, his words were not ablaze with the terrors of imminent judgment, and he attracted at first comparatively little attention. "The Jews require a sign," said Paul. What dost thou work? is the question put to Jesus himself, according to the Fourth Gospel. Jesus must have been sorely tempted—many preachers even nowadays know the same trial—to resort to spectacular methods, to win notice by recourse to the unusual, the unexpected. And it must be remembered, also, that Jesus, having no conception, as we have, of the orderliness of nature in natural law, actually believed that if God were with a prophet His presence would be manifested by wonderful, miraculous works. Why, then, should not he, who had no doubt that he was a servant of God preaching his truth, appeal to miracle as an

effectual indorsement of his mission? And it may well be that in his darker hours he himself needed the reassurance which his inherited feelings might have found in a miracle. This is the purport of the second temptation: Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple, if thou art the son of God. His angels will bear thee up, and then thou and the gaping crowd below shall be henceforth free from all doubt as to thy divine mission; for your own sake and for theirs, appeal to miracle and end this period of obscurity and occasional uncertainty. It is a signal mark of the greatness of Jesus that he positively refused to give a sign and even, with prophetic instinct for natural law, told his questioners that the only signs of God were in the regular, orderly processes of nature (Mt. xvi. 1-4).

"And so no more our hearts shall plead
For miracle and sign;
Thy order and thy faithfulness
Are all in all divine.
There are thy revelations vast
From earliest days of yore;
These are our confidence and peace:
We cannot wish for more."

And yet in spite of this refusal, which its originality and difference from current opinion prove to be authentic, his disciples and the majority of the church to-day ascribe miracles to Jesus and even, falling in with the suggestion of the tempter, seek to prove by them that he was true son of God and preacher of truth.

What is the meaning of the third temptation?—Jesus was tempted to gain a position of great usefulness by the sacrifice of personal integrity.

The period of popular favor succeeded to that of obscurity; the multitudes were thronging about Jesus and hints of Messiahship were heard. It is reported that once the people were on the point of taking Jesus by force to make him king, but he hid himself from them (John vi. 15). It was easy just then in Palestine for any one to rouse the people to frenzied desperation by proclaiming himself the Messiah for whom all were looking. Towards every conspicuous man the people turned, eagerly questioning "Art *thou* he that should come?" What might not a great leader do with such a people! Why might not the triumphs of the Maccabean days be repeated? So the people thought, and Jesus must in some measure at least have shared their belief. Conscious that he was a man sent from God, anticipating the coming of some leader to organize victory, sensible of the popular hope and dawning confidence in him, realizing also the immense good that might be accomplished were he in a position of authority and influence, it is only natural that Jesus should have been tempted to accept the Messiahship and avow himself king of the Jews. One thing stood in the way: besides the ordinary Jewish ideals he had higher conceptions of the kingdom of God and deep seated in his heart was the belief that the seed and not the sword was the emblem of its increase. He felt also that he was to be a teacher of truth and nothing else. To proclaim himself king of the Jews would do violence to his highest ideals and his most intimate convictions of duty. But how much more good he could do as king than as humble preacher!

This is the moment of temptation which, with deep insight into the story, our artist has chosen as the subject of his picture. The face shows that Jesus has put Satan behind his back. It is the face of a man who is tempted, not by evil but by goodness, on his highest, not his lowest levels. There are no temptations so subtle as the temptations of power and usefulness. Why keep your ideal so high as to be practically useless? Say "Thou art worthy" to some lower ideal, and then from the vantage ground which that worship will give you men may be helped to some purpose. That was the deep significance of this third temptation, and by conquering it Jesus both saved his own soul and served all men, because he dared to be true. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

In teaching this lesson the story of spiritual crises in the case of other heroes should be read, *e. g.*, the temptation of the Buddha (most conveniently in "The Light of Asia") and the choice of Hercules in Xenophon's Memorabilia. See, also, Clarke's Legend of Thomas Didymus, pp. 209–220, and Martineau's sermon on Temptations of Power (Hours of Thought, 2d series, pp. 39–49).

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—What do you see in the picture that Jesus does not see? Is the face that of a man who is struggling with unmistakable evil?

The Story of Temptation.—Point out some of the particulars in which the story is true to nature. Are these any indication as to the origin of the story? Does this story remind you of the parables of Jesus? Is it an invention of the diciples or a parable of Jesus? Can you recall other instances in the Gospel where a parable is turned into an occurrence?

The Three Temptations.—Do they correspond to periods in the life of Jesus? What is the temptation of the workman, of the obscure prophet, of the applauded reformer? Where had Jesus learned the thoughts which gave him victory in the temptation? Did Jesus refuse to work miracles? Does the question of Jesus which is set for our "Golden Verse" gain in power when read in the light of the Third Temptation? Could Jesus have lost his soul? Can we lose our souls? How does the life of Jesus illustrate Emerson's lines?

LESSON VI.—The Sower.

Mt. xiii. 1–9.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed,
He shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.
Ps. cxxvi. 5,6.

Amidst a blinded world he saw
The oneness of the dual law.
Whittier.

Picture: The Sower, Jean Francois Millet (1814–1875).

There are many reasons why this picture is peculiarly appropriate. According to the accounts, this is the first parable that Jesus spoke, the first time that he used the form of teaching which afterwards became his favorite mode of communicating thought. Similarly, this picture of The Sower, painted in 1849, stands just at the dividing line between the two stages of Millet's art. It was in 1850 that he announced in a letter to a friend his determination to abandon mythological subjects and devote himself entirely to portraying the humble peasant life of France. In the parables Jesus conveyed his thought as in the later pictures Millet conveyed his, by means of subjects found in the commonplace life with which each was familiar.

Again, there is very much in Millet's life that reminds us of Jesus. Each was lowly born, each knew the distress of actual want, each was ignored during his lifetime and honored after his death, each opposed the prevailing ideals of his time, Millet in art as Jesus in religion, and, finally, each was able to dignify the seemingly hard, uninteresting life of peasant communities by showing its rich significance in suggestions of religion and beauty. As one looks at this picture of The Sower, he is irresistibly reminded of the life of the man who painted it and also of the man whose parable we are to study. Both sowed in obscurity and tears, both have reaped in light and joy.

What is a parable?—A parable is a story in which natural occurrences are so related as to reveal spiritual truths.

In the parable, at its best, the events described are such as may have occurred in nature, although it is not essential that the story should be based on an actual historical occurrence. Some of the parables of Jesus undoubtedly portray scenes actually before his eyes at the time they were spoken; some contain incidents which had happened within the memory of those who listened and would be instantly recalled. To the latter class, for instance, belongs the parable in Luke xix. 12, seq., where no one can fail to recognize, in the nobleman who went to the far country to receive for himself a kingdom, Archelaus, who after the death of his father, Herod, went to Rome that he might be established in his kingdom against the rebellious protests of the Jews. But it is not necessary to suppose that the parable of the Prodigal Son is drawn from an incident which Jesus had witnessed in actual life, or that the merchant seeking goodly pearls was an actual person whom Jesus might have named if he had chosen to do so. The parable need not be true to fact, it must be true to nature. A story in which trees talk and men do impossible things is a fable or an allegory, but not a parable. The

essence of a parable is in its fidelity to nature, and therein lies its value also.

Why did Jesus teach in parables?—

Because he had learned the truth which he taught by observation of nature.

The chronology of our gospels is so very uncertain that it is unsafe to assert, as some have done, that at a certain stage in his ministry Jesus altered his mode of teaching from pithy, sententious sayings, such as the rabbis used, to parables which gave light only to those who already had eyes to see and threw into even greater confusion and blindness those who had not. We know that Jesus learned truth from the great parable of Nature, which he knew to be a parable, and we cannot believe that he chose this form merely because he wished to put his thought in such a way that those who could not receive it would not be offended, while those whose spiritual sympathies were like his would discern the truth in the symbol. It may be that at first he modeled his teaching after the pattern of the rabbis, and afterwards changed his method for some reason not to be discovered now; but, however that may be, the parable was the natural mode of his expression, because it was in parables that truth came to him.

When a parable is true to nature it has a value beyond that attaching to a simple illustration. One of the hardest things to learn is that an illustration, as such, proves nothing; that because a speaker uses one so skillfully that we see his thought clearly, it by no means follows that his thought is true. But when the parable is based upon a natural law or universal principle and the analogy between the symbol and the thing symbolized is vital, then the parable is more than an illustration, it is proof, for what appears to be the dual law is really one. Perhaps the most important discovery of this century, important because it has been made the fundamental postulate of all study, is that man is part of the world, that nature does not cease to be nature when it becomes human. Hence a law of nature is a law of human nature also. Of course, Jesus did not formulate this idea, but his teaching is based on it nevertheless, and, therefore, his parables have a probative and not merely an illustrative value. The originality of Jesus' thought and its substantial truth are due, at bottom, to his belief, unconscious perhaps, but no less certain, that God was one, revealed in nature and in human nature alike, and hence that all nature is a parable of revelation.

Amidst a blinded world he saw
The oneness of the dual law.

What did Jesus mean to teach by the parable of the sower?—That the character of a man determines his reception of truth.

In the parable the four kinds of soil represent four conditions of soul.

(a) The Wayside Hearers.—It seems probable that the fields were separated not by fences but by beaten lanes, or driveways, and therefore as the farmer cast his seed near the edge of a field some of it might easily fall upon the compact earth, where the birds would pick it up. "It is still common in the East to see large flocks of birds following the husbandman as he sows his wheat, and eagerly picking up every grain that has not sunk out of sight." There are hearts and minds that are all roadway; the various ways in which they became so each can discover for himself. It was said once that, in the application of the parable, the hearts became hard (gospel-hardened was the phrase used) because there were so many trampling about to sow seed. One danger in these days is that by reading much and thinking little our minds may become quite incapable of taking in an idea, which lies in the mind, finding lodgment only till it is caught away by some new sensation.

(b) The Shallow Hearers.—Frequently in Palestine one will find places where the soil lies thin over a limestone ledge. When seed falls into such ground it is subjected to greater heat and quickly springs up, to wither away as quickly, because it has no depth of earth. There are persons whose hearts are as rock, but who have a shallow layer of sentimentality, in which truth thrives for a time but never comes to anything. It often happens that impenetrable feeling and sentimental emotion are found in the same character, and frequently the capacity for deep feeling is lost by overexercise of emotion.

(c) The Thorn-Sown Hearers.—These are they in whom the sowing promises a fruitful harvest, but cheap ambitions, cravings after mean success, greediness for pleasures that are only sensuous, and lust for money or fame, check the growing grain and ruin the promising harvest.

(d) The Deep-Soil Hearers.—If a man's mind is open and receptive, if it be not over-crusted or under-ledged, and if he desires supremely to know truth and do right, then, said Jesus, into the mind of such a man truth enters, germinates and brings forth fruit, lifting the soul to greater beauty, as the life hidden within the lily "brings earth-born atoms to the glory of the air." But even in the good soil there are grades of depth and richness, as among equally good men there are differences of ability and genius, and as among the followers of Jesus there were Bartholomew and Peter, Thaddeus and John.

Jesus is reported to have said that there were many who *could not* receive his words. Modern psychology also teaches that since a new idea must be incorporated into the organism of thought already existing, it is physically impossible that new truth should find place in some minds. All nature is a constant parable, every event or fact is a seed of truth, and as we grow in depth of character, the parable is understood, the transforming truth is received. The lesson of the parable is summed up in Jesus' beatitude,—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Besides this main lesson of the parable there are a few side suggestions which deserve brief mention.

(1) The farmer, like God, sows broadcast, and does not pick his soil. Nor is the seed that bears no fruit really wasted. If it falls by the wayside, God's birds are fed, and science has taught us that by the agency of birds seeds are often carried from hard to fruitful soils; if it falls on the soil-filmed ledge, where it springs up only to die, its shoot, that never came to maturity, adds to the depth of soil and gives the seed that shall come next a better chance; if it falls among the thorns, a nature with good grain in it, even though choked by thorns, is better than one that is nothing but a brier-patch. Moreover, the four kinds of soil are sometimes found in the same individual. Don't be too scrupulous about picking soils.

(2) The Faith of the Sower. When corn is scarce it seems foolhardy to cast away what is needed for food, but the sower does it, relying upon the natural laws of seed-time and harvest. The faith of the sower is in every one who, in like reliance, casts away a present good, hoping for something better in the future. Abraham, who went out from home, forfeiting its advantages and delights, not knowing whither he went, is called the "Father of the faithful."

(3) The slow growth of truth even (shall we say, particularly) in the best soils. It is one of the laws of nature that the higher in the scale an animal is the longer is the time required for it to reach maturity. Geology has taught us of stretches of time so vast that the imagination utterly fails to take them in,—all these ages has the truth to which we have now attained been climbing toward realization. We sometimes get discouraged because our work shows such poor results; the discouragement should come in reality when the results are immediate. The best work is done on long lines. One soweth *and another reapeth.*

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Do you suppose Jesus had ever watched a sower like this in the picture? Imagine painter and preacher looking at the same person or event,—would they really see the same thing? How did Millet dignify the humble life that he knew? Millet's pictures and Jesus' parables. Is there any likeness between them?

Teaching by Parable.—What is a parable? How does it differ from a fable or an allegory? Are Hans Christian Andersen's stories parables? Have you read Mrs. Gatty's Parables from Nature? Are they really parables? What value has the parable as means of proof? Can you think of any novels that could be called parables?

The Parable of the Sower.—Had Jesus seen everything that he describes? How had he arrived at the analogy between the sower and the teacher? Is the analogy real? Are all these kinds of soil in each of us? What did Jesus mean by saying, "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him"? Is it possible for us to live in such a way that we cannot enjoy a beautiful picture or landscape, and read with delight a beautiful poem? What do you think of this sentence from Ruskin (Queen of the Air, Sec. 111)—"Because through all my life I have desired good, and not evil; because I have been kind to many; have wished to be kind to all; have willfully injured none; and because I have loved much and not selfishly; therefore the morning light is yet visible to me on those hills, and you who read may trust my thought and word"? Could Jesus have said the same?

LESSON VII.—How Jesus Taught.

Across the sea, along the shore,
In numbers more and ever more,
From lonely hut and busy town,
The valley through, the mountain down,
* * * * *
What is it came ye here to note?—
A young man preaching in a boat.

Clough.

His sermons were the healthful talk
That shorter made the mountain walk,
His wayside texts were flowers and birds,
When mingled with his gracious words
The rustle of the tamarisk-tree
And ripple-wash of Galilee.

Whittier.

Picture: Christ Preaching from a Boat—Hofmann.

In the last lesson the figure of the sower reminded us of the period of obscurity in the life of Jesus when he was casting abroad the seed of his thought. To-day, we study the period of popular favor in which the people were drawn to him by the simplicity and beauty of his speech and before the Pharisees had taken serious alarm. The figure of Jesus is the least satisfactory part of the picture; his attitude is conventional, but quite unnatural; yet the listeners are good, and the picture as a whole helps us to understand the sort of people who cared most for Jesus' teaching, the way in which he taught, and the probable history of his words before they were put into the literary form in which we have them.

What was the pulpit of Jesus?—A fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee or a green spot on the hill-side.

Jesus is represented as preaching from a boat in the Sea of Galilee. This body of water, called also the Sea of Chinnereth and the Lake of Gennesaret, or Tiberias, is like a potato-shaped bulge of the River Jordan, about twelve and one-half miles long and six and one-half miles wide at the northern end. It lies in a deep basin between six and seven hundred feet lower than the level of the Mediterranean, and is fed by copious springs. The shores are more abrupt and craggy than the picture would lead one to suppose, and Josephus speaks particularly of the abundance of trees in the neighboring country, mentioning walnut, fig, palm, and olive trees. (Can you tell from the picture what trees the artist intended to represent?) Fish were plentiful in the clear, sweet waters of the lake, and in the time of Jesus, though not now, fishing boats were numerous, supplying the populous towns near by with their catch. It is from one of these smaller craft that Jesus is speaking in the picture.

Who made up his audience?—Jesus spoke usually to a chance-gathered company, only a few of whom had come expressly to hear him.

Looking at the picture we see some familiar faces. The three in the boat with Jesus seem to be Peter and James and John. In the little group of seven standing on the shore at the right of Jesus we distinguish at least two faces that are to be seen in other pictures by Hofmann. The rich young ruler is unmistakable, and the face of the old man beside him recalls one of the rabbis in the picture of Jesus in the Temple. Do you notice the two who can hardly see the figure of Jesus because of the lordly Pharisee who blocks their view? Do you think Hofmann meant to teach us anything by that? In the background at the extreme left is an aged man (how could you guess that he is blind?) whose expression suggests old Simeon in one of the birth-legends of Jesus (Luke ii. 25-35). In the group of women it seems to me that, besides the aged woman at the rear and the two mothers with their children, we can see girls, unmarried women, and a young widow—could you pick them out by their faces alone, even if there were no other sign? The boy at the left of the picture, with water-bottle slung at his side, musical instrument in his hand, and dog lying with head on his lap, has more of a Greek than a Jewish look. (Is there anything to indicate that he was a shepherd-boy?) It will refresh the memory of last week's lesson, if we try to find in this picture the four classes of hearers. It appears clearly from this picture that the preaching of Jesus was entirely informal: he had no fixed times for preaching or prepared discourses to deliver. We cannot imagine him racking his brains for a subject or preaching in a church behind a pulpit with a carefully prepared manuscript under his eyes. And therefore, befitting the character of his audience and his manner of teaching, his talk was mainly in parables and pithy say-

ings which could be quickly comprehended and easily remembered.

How were the words of Jesus preserved?—His sayings were carried in memory for a long time, then they were gathered together, written down and translated into Greek.

It is important that we should have some knowledge, clear and accurate so far as it goes, of the way in which what Jesus said has came down to us, for this "young man preaching in a boat" has proved one of the most potent influences in the history of the world and his words are still appealed to by many religious people as final authority, And the first thing to notice is that Jesus was a Jew and spoke to Jews, consequently he must have spoken in the language ordinarily used by Jews in Palestine at his time. That language was not Greek, but a dialect of Hebrew known as Aramaic. Do you see in the picture any one who seems to be taking down what he is saying? Reporters were not known in those days, and, even if they had been, Jewish prejudice was so strongly against preserving the words of a teacher in any way except by memory that none would have attended Jesus. That supercilious Pharisee will go away and tell his friends what he has heard the new teacher say. Do you think he will report Jesus accurately, or will he pick out things he does not like and make them appear by his telling even worse than they really were? The young mother nursing her baby will go home and tell her husband what she has heard, but her report will not be like the Pharisee's. He in turn will report to the man who works beside him what his wife had told him about the sermon of Jesus, and he will tell some one else, and so on. Read over the sixth chapter of Matthew and try to see what various persons in the picture would have carried away if they had heard Jesus speak all these words. We have a clear idea now of the way in which the teachings of Jesus would be listened to and told, by those who heard him, to their friends. Not till years after Jesus died did any one think of putting down in black and white what he had heard him say. Do you think that the memory even of one who actually heard him speak could be trusted to carry his teachings word for word all those years? And how much less dependence could we place on the report if it came from one who knew nothing about Jesus except what had been told him. No one could remember all that Jesus said, some one would remember one saying or parable, some one else another; by and by people would begin to write down what they had remembered or heard, and so besides the Oral Tradition there would be a good many written records —but all in Aramaic, the language which Jesus spoke. In this language, according to an ancient tradition, the apostle Matthew some forty years after Jesus died wrote down what he remembered of the sayings of Jesus. If we had that document, precisely as Matthew wrote it, we should still have to hesitate about putting implicit confidence in it, for forty years is a long time and the human memory is very treacherous; but that document has disappeared. Scholars think it can be traced in our Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but a great deal has been added to it from sources that we know nothing about, and, what is worse, we have at the very best *only a Greek translation, made by some unknown person, of the original Aramaic writing.* Something like this, then, has been the history of the words of Jesus: spoken informally to audiences like that shown in the picture, they were handed down by word of mouth for nearly a generation; then one of the immediate followers of Jesus wrote down what he remembered of the sayings of Jesus as he remembered them; some unknown man translated this document from Aramaic into Greek, and this Greek translation, together with other records and memories also translated, was worked up by other hands into the Gospels as we have them. Does it not seem strange that after eighteen centuries the words which this young man is saying in this perfectly informal way should be regarded as the infallible utterances of God himself? Does it not seem stranger that people should imagine that his words, even if infallible when he spoke them, have been transmitted to us with anything like accuracy? The marvel is that people remembered so well and that, in spite of the perils of transmission and translation, the report of his teaching must be in the main substantially correct, since it bears so clearly the stamp of one unique personality.

NOTE.—For the sake of clearness, only the "words" of Jesus have been referred to and no mention has been made of the (traditional) original Mark document.

QUESTIONS.

That we may see how accurately the words of Jesus have come down to us, let us ask the teacher to read us a few verses from the book of Proverbs. Now let each in the class repeat what he remembers: have we all remembered the same things? Has any one remembered everything that was read? How accurately can we repeat the words? Now let us ask the teacher to read us a short story, perhaps one of Hans Christian Andersen's, and we will try to tell it over again. Can any one remember all the points in the story? Did we get all the details right? Do we all see what Andersen meant to teach by the story?

This helps us to understand how the sayings in the parables of Jesus were understood by those who heard them first. Have we any records by first hearers? Let us play the game of "Scandal": The teacher will whisper a sentence—only one, and it must not be repeated—to one scholar in the class; he will whisper it to another, and so on through the class. Now let the last boy write down the sentence as he heard it and read it aloud. Is it exactly as the teacher whispered it first? During how many years were the words of Jesus passed on in this way? Have we any words that Jesus actually spoke? In what language did he teach? In what language do we read his teachings? Have we any means of discriminating in our gospel between what Jesus actually said and what his followers only believed that he said?

LESSON VIII.—The Good Samaritan.

Luke x. 25-38.

To worship rightly is to love each other.
Whittier.

To give peace to a single heart by a single kindly act is worth more than a thousand head-bowings in prayer.
Sadi.

Picture: The Good Samaritan. By J. J. Henner.

Our picture does not quite tell its own story. We see a young man whose relaxed muscles and parted lips show that he is badly hurt and probably at the point of death. We might guess perhaps that his condition was not due to accident or disease, since on neither hypothesis could his nakedness be satisfactorily accounted for. An old man whose face, hidden though it is, makes upon us the impression of anxious kindness, is holding his hand over the young man's heart to see whether it still beats. But who these persons are and what is the story of which this scene is clearly only an episode, we must read the parable to discover.

From the story, then, as Jesus told it, we learn that the scene of the picture is on the mountain road leading from Jerusalem down to Jericho, about twenty miles distant. The accounts of travelers assure us that the artist has not exaggerated the desolateness of the way: one describes it as "leading through a wild and dreadful solitude, a veritable rocky pass, with rocky walls right and left and rough stones scattered confusedly under foot;" and it is said (though on doubtful authority) that it was known as the Way of Blood, because frequented by highwaymen. This young man, then, must have been set upon by some of these robbers, who, after stealing all that he had, have left him naked and half dead by the roadside. The parable tells us further that while he lay there helpless and dying, three men saw him, only one of whom had humanity enough to give him assistance. The first of the three was a priest, a man whose sole business in life was to conduct the worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem; but this cannot be the priest, for the parable says that so far from helping the sufferer he actually crossed to the other side of the road and hurried by. Perhaps he thought the man was dead, and in that case to touch him would be to spoil his priestly purity and incur ceremonial defilement. The next to come along was a Levite, also a holy man and employed in the service of the temple, although in a subordinate position. All priests were Levites, but only one family of the Levites could be priests. But the Levite had too much to do in the service of God to turn aside for the service of man, and he was so busy caring for the temple of God in Jerusalem that he could give no heed to the tem-

ple of God in man. So he also, like the priest before him, passed by on the other side. Then a Samaritan approached, but there are many reasons why we should not expect him to stop and look after the dying man. He was a Samaritan and the victim of the robbery was probably a Jew, and "Jews had no dealings with Samaritans." There was bitter race-hatred between the two. If the priest and the Levite had met the Samaritan they would have scorned him as a heretic who did not know how to worship God aright; and the young man, had he been well and traveling with them, might have echoed the taunts with contemptuous railings, which the Samaritan would have returned with defiance. It would have been no more than would have been expected, then, if the Samaritan, seeing the helpless and possibly murdered Jew, had said with a grim smile: "Let his own people care for him; why should a 'dog of a Samaritan' look after a Jew?" Besides he was on a business trip and had valuables with him. The priest and the Levite were tolerably safe on the road, for they were not supposed to have much money with them and were respected as holy men of God besides; but this was a man whom it would be worth while to waylay, and he was a Samaritan, too. Quite the most prudent course therefore would have been for him to put spurs to his beast and get out of the dangerous locality with all speed, since this might possibly be a decoy, and at any rate the band could not be very far off, perhaps were even lurking close by waiting for a second victim. Moreover if he, a Samaritan, were found near a wounded Jew he might incur the suspicion of having been the assailant. Considerations of race prejudice and personal safety combined to urge him on; nevertheless, "moved with compassion," he bound up his wounds, using the best and most expensive healing lotion known in those days, and, supporting him on the beast while he walked alongside, brought him to a neighboring inn,—whose ruins may still be seen, it is said, on the Bloody Way,—and there stayed with him over night. In the morning, unable to delay his journey any longer, he left with the landlord a sum equivalent to two days' wages of an ordinary laborer, ordering him not to stint his care or look to the wounded man for recompense, but to spend all that was needful, and—"when I come again *I* will repay thee." So runs the story which interprets our picture, and now let us see why Jesus told it.

What was the intent of this parable?—It was spoken to teach a questioning scribe that obligation to love and helpfulness could not be defined by lines of race.

The occasion of the parable was this: A man learned in the law asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, that is, to have a place in the kingdom of the Messiah, which, as he believed, was soon to appear on the earth. The question was not an unusual one, and the "lawyer" doubtless supposed that Jesus would bring forth some new wire-drawn refinement or infinitesimal scruple which he would command him to observe. Instead of that, however, Jesus referred him directly to the law, and, accepting his own broad comprehensive summary of it in the two requirements of love to God and love to man, bade him obey these two commands if he would be saved. Then the lawyer, determined to prove that his question was less simple than it had been made to appear, asked, Who is my neighbor? In reply Jesus told him the story we have just related, and at the close asked him which of them—priest, Levite, or Samaritan—proved himself neighbor to the unfortunate man. It was a hard question for one to answer who believed religiously that no good thing could come out of Samaria, and to avoid pronouncing the hated name, he answered: He that showed mercy on him. *Thus Jesus had made him confess that a Samaritan was neighbor to a Jew.* Hence to love one's neighbor meant more than to love your fellow-Jews, for neighbors included Samaritans also.

How did this teaching agree with Jewish ideas?—It was in harmony with some of the noblest prophetic utterances, but it was in opposition to Jewish belief and practice at the time of Jesus.

It is remarkable that the high-water mark of Jewish thought prior to Jesus and Paul was reached in the eighth century B. C. by the very first of the writing prophets, Amos. To him Yahwe was god of the whole earth and not of Israel alone; he had brought the Jews out of Egypt, but he had also led the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir. But to this magnificent universalism popular Jewish

thought never attained, and when Jesus lived it is probable that no ordinary Jew would have supposed, even for an instant, that a Samaritan was his neighbor whom he must love even as he loved himself. Then, under the influence of legalism, a neighbor was interpreted to mean only "a member of the Hebrew race and commonwealth." In this as in other respects Jesus was one of the prophets opposing Phariseeism as his predecessors had opposed sacerdotalism. He widened the term neighbor, and with it the whole conception of Law and of Israel's relation to God, by including under it Samaritans as well as Jews. Such teaching gave a deathblow to national and religious Particularism.

It has been questioned whether Jesus can have taught as he is here reported. Judging from other passages in the Gospels we should conclude that Jesus felt toward the Samaritans about as the rest of his nation did, and this story occurs in a section peculiar to Luke and containing an account of a Samaritan missionary tour which is almost certainly not authentic. It may be taken for granted that Jesus had no such large views of humanity and its destiny as Paul afterward preached, for Jesus was not a philosophic thinker. It is not apparent, either, that he had any enthusiasm for Humanity, in the present use of that phrase,— the idea of Humanity as an entity was quite beyond him,— but his practical sympathies were unbounded. He may have told his disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, and still have been touched and taught by the story of the Good Samaritan, which he may have heard from some one else. In real life we may be perfectly sure that Jesus would have helped a Samaritan in need, and rejoiced over a Samaritan's act of kindness. Moreover, the story is put at a comparatively late period in his life, when his sympathies may have been broader than they were at first. At any rate, whether Jesus spoke this parable or not, and probably he did, it represents the thought of Christianity, if not of Christ, and its idea is the idea which afterward governed the church.

What is the implication of the parable?—The true worship of God is shown in the service of man.

It has been well said that in this parable is taught "the sanctity of charity." The priest and the Levite were holy men by profession, the Samaritan was holy by character and kindness, but no one who heard the story can have doubted which holiness Jesus preferred. To the lawyer he said, "Go and do thou likewise." This is in keeping with Jesus' invariable habit of laying all stress upon the simple, honest virtues and ignoring completely the concerns of greatest moment to the Pharisees. In this, too, Jesus deserted his age for the age of the prophets. In protest against sacrifice and ritual the prophets had taught that God cares supremely only for justice and mercy and truth, and Jesus repeats the same declaration in an age of narrowing casuistry. It is so hard for us to realize the world in which Jesus lived that we fail to understand how revolutionary his teaching was. No more daring radical ever breathed than this carpenter of Nazareth. To tell men that what God required of them was conduct like that of the Samaritan was strange doctrine then, and in some quarters it is heresy now. Here, if ever, in reply to a direct question, was the occasion for Jesus to set forth explicitly his scheme of salvation, if he had one. Was his answer like the one that would be given in a revival meeting to-day? Did he say anything about belief in himself, in the Trinity or the atonement? In place of that, he tells the story of one man who helped another in distress and urges his questioner to follow the example. The true worshiper of God and lover of men was the Samaritan who showed mercy.

What brought Jesus into disfavor with the people, particularly with the Pharisees?—His opposition to their race prejudice and ethical, social and religious convictions.

We have followed Jesus through the periods of obscurity and popular favor, we are very soon to follow him into the cloud of opposition and ultimate murder. Therefore we have to consider in a few lessons what that teaching was which finally brought Jesus to the cross. This parable shows two reasons why his own people grew to hate him. The first was his direct condemnation of race prejudice. The Jews hated the godless Samaritans. Jesus showed a typical Jew that a Samaritan knew who his neighbor was far better than he did, and actually held up a Samaritan as a model for a Jew. Lines of race

were no longer to separate those whom human feeling united. Human feeling makes the neighbor; all who suffer as we suffer, and may be succored as we in their place would like to be helped, are neighbors in the meaning of the commandment. It filled a Jew with wrath to be told that God required him to love a Samaritan as himself. Then again, Jesus offended the religious convictions of his epoch. He taught that goodness was the principal thing, not fussy piety; and that was unbearable, for it is often much easier to be pious than to be good, to tithe worthless garden-herbs than to tell the truth. When we see how such simple preaching is received nowadays even by the church which worships Jesus as very God we cannot be surprised that it was distasteful eighteen centuries ago. Even yet what is called mere morality is deemed inimical to religion.

QUESTIONS.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PICTURE.—What could you guess about the picture if you had not the story upon which it is based? Was the painter at fault in leaving a cloth spread over the rock? Does the Samaritan seem to have any fear for his own safety?

THE PARABLE.—Put yourself in the priest's place, and see what excuse he may have had for not stopping. Did his religious character make it easier for him to stop or to pass by? What does that show, then, about the value of his religion? Can you find any excuse for the Levite? If you had been the Samaritan, would you have had any excuse for going by?

THE IDEA OF NEIGHBOR.—How do you suppose the lawyer would have answered his own question? How would the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, have answered it? Do you suppose that the man who was robbed would have answered it in the same way before and after his misfortune? Do we always know who our neighbors are? (The question is meant to be ambiguous.)

THE PRIEST AND THE SAMARITAN.—What would the priest have said if he had seen the Samaritan taking care of the wounded Jew? Is there any hint in the parable that he was a Jew? Why have we assumed that he was? Which of the three proved himself a true worshiper of God?

CAUSES OF OPPOSITION.—What does this parable teach about the reasons why Jesus came to be disliked? What other men can you think of who dared to defy race prejudice and deny current religious convictions? Have they suffered as Jesus did?

LESSON IX.—Jesus and the Sinner.

Luke vii. 36-50.

This man receiveth sinners.—Luke xv.2.

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here the parts shift?
Here the creature surpass the creator,—the end, what began?

Picture: Jesus and the Sinner. Hofmann.

In the last lesson we saw how Jesus offended prejudices of race and religion and so turned the tide against him. To-day we are to study the chief among his ethical judgments, which would still be a ground of reproach in many quarters were it thoroughly understood. The picture shows us three Pharisees amazed and indignant at the way Jesus is treating a woman who is pouring ointment from an alabaster flask upon his feet and wiping them with her hair. The picture is inaccurate in detail, for Jesus was reclining, not sitting upright at the table, and there is a patronizing lordliness in the hand outstretched over the woman's head that we cannot like, but the faces of the Pharisees are good and instructive. One is looking at Jesus in horror that he should allow this woman, who in the narrative is vaguely but significantly styled "a sinner," to come so near him. Another Pharisee who has recognized the woman is whispering into his neighbor's ear that Jesus cannot be a prophet, for if he were he would know her character and, of course, would condemn her. The third, regardless of Jesus, is almost rising from his chair as if fearing that the

woman at whom he looks with scorn and disgust may attempt to perform a like service for him.

Which of the company did Jesus think the best?—Jesus taught that the sinful woman was morally better than the complacent Pharisees.

This is certainly a startling judgment. Of the woman we know absolutely nothing. Matthew, Mark and John speak of an anointing in Bethany by Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha; and therefore many have supposed that the same incident is related by Luke, who is silent as to the woman's name and lays the scene in the home of Simon indeed, although in Luke he is a Galilean Pharisee, while the Simon of the other account is a leper of Bethany. But it is incredible from all we know of Mary that she was a woman who could be called "sinful" and of whom Jesus would say "Her sins which are many." There may have been two anointings of Jesus, or the reluctance of Jesus' disciples to believe that their Master could have treated an abandoned woman so kindly may have led them to twist the story which Luke has preserved in its original form. Fortunately the representation which this story gives, as found in Luke, of Jesus' ethical judgment, is so thoroughly substantiated by all other accounts that we may dismiss merely critical questions and regard the narrative in Luke, and this picture which is based upon it, as true to the feeling of Jesus if not to historic fact.

But are we willing to agree that the woman at the feet of Jesus is really better, morally, than the Pharisees who sit at his side? Look at their faces: with perhaps the exception of the whisperer, all of these men have pure, clean faces. That Pharisee with hands crossed on his breast is not one who would "devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers"; he is obviously no hypocrite, but an honest, upright, pure-minded man. The Pharisee who is ready to rise shows a face that tells of long fastings if not of prayer; he also is a man of integrity and purity. Why, then, does Jesus contrast them unfavorably with the sinful woman? Their faces show: for while there is no trace of evil passion there is not a single hint of gentleness or tender sympathy. They despise the woman, and cannot see why Jesus allows her in his presence. Therefore were they in the opinion of Jesus in worse case morally than the woman at his feet. He thought that coldness was worse than passion, that unsympathetic righteousness ranked lower in the moral scale than erring tenderness. Sins of the flesh were less heinous than sins of the spirit. In Dante the same verdict is rendered; sins of incontinence are punished in the circles next below the unbaptized, while sins of treachery have their retribution in the belt just above the lowest depth of hell. Yet, does not this shock our moral sense? Is it really true that a perfectly respectable but hard-hearted, unfeeling man is farther from the kingdom of heaven than another who, though warm and sympathetic, is guilty of incontinence? That is a fair question for discussion. There is no doubt, however, how Jesus felt about it; his associations were often with social outcasts—the publicans and sinners. He believed in them, and trusted them most of all, finding them most responsive to his word. We judge instinctively the same way. We love reckless, loving Rip Van Winkle, but we turn away from a bloodless, heartless man. To the religious teachers of the day Jesus said: "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you."

What did Jesus say about forgiveness?—Jesus said that the presence of love in a man or woman always meant forgiveness.

Jesus held forth no low standard of life. It was he who taught that it were better to cast eye or foot away than to be led into sin; he took judgment upon evil in heart or even in look as well as in actual deed; his ideal of morality was extraordinarily high, he shared the divine hatred of sin. And yet with all rigor of the moral code he had also a tender yearning over the lost sheep of Israel whom he had come to call to repentance. Jesus declared to Simon that the woman's sins were forgiven, but the ground of forgiveness is obscure in the narrative. Judging from the parable of the two debtors, which Luke assigns to this occasion, we should conclude that this act of reverent, grateful homage was prompted by words of forgiveness which Jesus had previously spoken to her. She loved much because much had been forgiven to her. But in the story as we have it there is a hint of a very much more surprising doctrine, namely, that sin which is prompted by

love is forgiven because of that love. It may be that the latter thought represents the real teaching of Jesus, which his disciples either misunderstood or modified because of its possible dangerous consequences. It is beyond doubt, however, that Jesus taught that in a loving temper was the only forgiveness for sin. In contrast to Paul, who ordinarily conceived of forgiveness as something external and forensic, Jesus always thought of it as inward and ethical. The man who forgives his brother is himself forgiven by God, since forgiveness of sin can be only the removal of sin, which is selfishness, from the heart. If love be within, sin is not there, and did not Jesus always put evil in the heart-motive and not in the outward act of transgression? We see, therefore, that this idea of forgiveness to love which, perhaps, shocks us at first stating, is really in harmony with a great deal of the thought peculiar to Jesus, it falls in with his general way of thinking, and may therefore have been his teaching in this particular case. If one do wrong from love does the love redeem the fault? In any event, there is no forgiveness while the heart remains hard and selfish. A great deal is said in current religious teaching about forgiveness of sins, but it is usually in the line of Paul's thought. Indeed, in this very narration, as Luke gives it, the closing verses have an unmistakably Pauline ring. "Thy faith hath saved thee"—but the real Jesus is heard in the other saying: "For she loved much." Sin is in the heart; if the heart be cold and unsympathetic the man is sinful, though the conduct may be blameless in its obedience to the "Thou shalt not" of law; sin is forgiven only when the heart is restored to sympathetic, tender, unselfish love. Only in the spirit of willingness to forgive others is a man's own forgiveness found.

How could Jesus speak for God in forgiving sins?—Because he knew that God could not be more harsh and severe than man, and he found in his own heart only pity and forgiveness for penitent sinners.

We have come upon another application of what in an earlier lesson we found to be the distinctive and peculiar method of Jesus—he reasoned from man to God and from God to man. His ethical principle is, "Treat men as God treats them—Be ye perfect even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." Beyond this law we can hardly go, for the moral law which is to govern the relations of man to man must be revealed in nature; by that law God deals with man and by that same law man must ultimately treat his brother. As Dr. Cone has admirably said: "The peculiar, the original contribution which Jesus made to this department of ethics consists in the setting in which he placed the duty of universal love, or perhaps, better, in the foundation on which he established it, when he gave it a religious significance and sanction by enjoining it as a duty for men on the ground of the divine love toward them." And matching this thought of the duty of man to man is another of the feeling of God toward man. Jesus regarded his thoughts and feelings as revelations of God. Hence when he felt pity for the wayward and fallen he knew that God pited them too. When he found no condemnation in his own heart he declared the forgiveness of God. To say that Jesus could not have pronounced forgiveness in the name of God unless he were himself God is to miss utterly the very central idea of Jesus. So men did see in Jesus a fresh revelation of God. The expression of the Pharisees in the picture shows how they felt toward sinful men and women; in them is the revelation of the wrath of God against all unrighteousness; but Jesus was a purer, better man than any one of his table-companions, and in his compassion was a revelation of the love and pity of God. It was rare then—is it not rare now?—to see purity combined with pity for the impure, and to find that union of qualities in a man is a revelation of their existence in God. In Jesus men saw that purity could be tender and that tenderness could be pure.

How did this teaching turn the people against Jesus?—It offended their ethical traditions and made them question his purity and prophetic character.

Is it strange that men should have drawn back from such teaching as we have studied to-day? Are we quite sure of its truth ourselves? Does it not still arouse suspicion when a man "receiveth sinners"? Are we ready to agree that sins of the spirit are actually worse than sins of the flesh?

Is it clear to us that love maketh an atonement for sins? We have been taught for so many years that Jesus was truly God, and the relics of that belief still color our feeling so deeply, that we fail to realize the sublime audacity which led him to affirm that God felt as he, the obscure carpenter of an obscure Galilean town, felt toward sinners. Among the Jews, who abhorred uncleanness, who had got into the way of thinking of God as a judge and his relation to men as legal, and who had a written revelation of God which they deemed supreme and final is it any wonder that there arose a revolt against the teaching of Jesus?

In teaching this lesson the greatest care must be taken not to minimize the guilt of sins of the flesh, but to show in their true heinousness the more subtle sins of the spirit. Hawthorne has much that bears on the subject—see, for instance, the character of Hilda in "The Marble Faun" (cf. especially chaps. xxiii. and xlii.), the stories of "Egotism," "The Christmas Banquet," "Ethan Brand" and "The Man of Adamant." Dante also should be studied.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Its inaccuracies of detail,—could you discover any from reading the account in Luke even without any other knowledge of Eastern customs? What sort of men should you judge the Pharisees to be from their faces, from the direction in which each is looking? Do you like the attitude of Jesus?

The Ethical Discrimination of Jesus.—Do you really think that Jesus was right in his ethical judgment upon heartless Pharisees and passionate sinners? Whom would Jesus call "the perishing classes"? Can you think of other sayings attributed to him or stories told of him which have the same idea? Do you think of other great teachers in literature and religion who have taught similarly? What is forgiveness? What revelation of God did men find in Jesus?

The Ethical Law of Jesus.—What was it? How sound do you think it is? Can we find out how God treats men? Has society adopted that principle? In an article on The Psychological Laboratory at Harvard, Dr. Nichols says; "Every ethical problem is a pyschological problem." Has that any bearing upon this principle of Jesus?

The Ethical Sanction of Jesus.—What was it? What has ethics to do with religion from the point of view of Jesus? The method of Jesus and how he applied it to moral problems.

And now, two questions, the most important of all: Have we truly represented the ethical thought of Jesus? Do you believe that thought to be true?

LESSON X.—"The Shepherd-God."

The Lord is my shepherd.
—Psalm xxiii. 1.

And yet the spirit in my heart
Says, wherefore should I pray
That thou shouldst seek me with thy love,
Since thou dost seek alway?

And dost not even wait until
I urge my steps to Thee;
But in the darkness of my life
Art coming still to me.
—J. W. Chadwick.

Picture: Shepherd and Sheep, by Ch. Jacque.

Does it excite surprise that while there are so many pictures of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, some one of which may be already on the walls of our school-room, this apparently non-religious picture should have been preferred? If, however, Jacque's picture seem not to be religious, the fault is in us and not in the picture. For it was a scene like that depicted here out of which Jesus drew the thought of God which we are to study to-day. Not that many precious verses in the Old Testament did not help him to interpret the scene, but is it not easy to imagine that when one day Jesus saw a shepherd watching his flock, or wandering over the hills in search of a sheep that had strayed away, he said to himself,—Even so God cares for and seeks his wandering children, he cannot be less mindful of them than this shepherd is of his flock; and then, remembering that he must treat men as God treated them,

he felt that he, too, must make it the business of his life to seek and to save that which was lost. This picture has been chosen that from it we may learn, as Jesus learned from the same scene in real life, a thought of God to which he was led under the guidance of his method. Look at the face of this shepherd as he stands surrounded by his sheep on the crest of a hill: it tells of alertness and trained watchfulness; if danger threatened the flock, that man would not run away like a cowardly hireling, for he and his sheep have grown to know and love each other. The sheep are not afraid of him, and would huddle about him if they were in peril. As the shepherd is to the sheep so God is to his children.

What is the shepherd thought of God?—God is both the strong protector of his children and the seeker after those who wander.

(a) The Protector God. This is a favorite thought in the Old Testament. Indeed, it is everywhere a primitive notion of God. There is an invisible war-lord who fights in defense of his land and its people. In the Old Testament we find that idea of God expressed under the figure of a shepherd; in the book of the Kings David says that as he, a shepherd-boy, had been true to his trust, and had saved his lambs from the wild beasts, so the Lord would be as faithful to him now as he had been to his flock. If we could believe the sweet twenty-third Psalm of Davidic authorship, we might find its origin in this incident. But no one could have said trustfully, The Lord is my shepherd, who had not seen or been a faithful shepherd. Frequently in the prophets of the captivity the belief appears that God is the shepherd of Israel, but almost invariably the tender side of the shepherd's life is brought forward. Attention is fastened not so much upon the firm, unyielding front toward the foes as toward the gentle, tender watchfulness over the flock. The powerful God, jealous for his reputation of invincible might, is also the God of loving watchfulness over his people Israel. Still, however, he is the shepherd of Israel alone, and it is for the flock rather than for its individual members that he cares. During the period which has been called the "four centuries of silence" (not quite accurately, however, since to this period must be given at least the Book of Daniel and many of the psalms), we find a heightening sense of the importance of the individual, but at the same time a loss of the old-time simple trust and confidence in God. God's eye was upon the individual, but it was an eye of jealous scrutiny, not of tender care. Portions of the book of Job (particularly the seventh chapter) sound like the protest of a sensitive soul against these two tendencies of individualism and distrust which, in combination, made life anxious and full of fear. In addition, as we have previously seen, the ethical idea of righteousness had been virtually lost, and the ceremonial, forensic thought had taken its place; hence there was fear that God's anger might be over the individual because of some unintentional oversight. Then Jesus came, to whom the individual, not the nation or Humanity, was the center of interest and the individualizing tendency reached its culmination in him, the bearer of a lyric faith. He swept away all dread born of the scruples of casuistry, and re-established ordinary every-day goodness and kindness as the ideals of conduct. So his teaching of God's watchfulness over the individual was bright and cheery, his eye was upon men for good. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." As the good shepherd knoweth his own sheep by name, so God was the protector of all his children, individually and not merely collectively. The nearest approach to this personal care in the Old Testament is in the 91st Psalm, evidently of very late date, but even here it is only the righteous for whom God cares and whom he protects. Jesus taught that God's love went out to all his children, to the unjust as well as the just. The good shepherd watches over the unruly sheep no less, but rather more, than over those who never stray from the fold. Jesus conceived of the shepherd-God as the protector of each human soul.

(b) The Seeking God. "If any man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and go unto the mountains and seek that which goeth asray?" "The good shepherd goeth after that which is lost until he find it." We touch here one of the most significant elements of Jesus' thought of God. To the most of his contemporaries, God was a sovereign sitting afar off waiting for man to keep perfectly his law before sending the blessed

Messianic kingdom for which all were looking. But Jesus held that God took the initiative; that he was not a waiting but a seeking God. Man was not to work to bring God's blessing, he was to live and labor in the inspiration of God's present and unvarying blessing. This idea is found in the Old Testament where it is taught that God chose Abraham and led him out of his home in the far East, and chose Jacob rather than Esau with no reason save his own will. God did not wait till Abraham got to Canaan and found him there: he revealed himself to Abraham and led him to Canaan. Paul, too, has this thought; in fact, as we shall see later on, it is one of his constructive ideas, salvation by grace and not of works. The reason why the parable of the shepherd was chosen instead of the prodigal son is that in the latter parable the father goes to meet his son only when he sees him almost at home. If Jesus had been giving the parable to illustrate his thought of God instead of to sting the Pharisees into shame by the example of the elder brother, he would have represented the father as seeking his child in the far country. God protecting and seeking each one of his children even in the far country of evil—this is Jesus' thought, illustrated by the parable of the shepherd.

What effect did this idea have upon Jesus?—It led him to a shepherd life, loving all and seeking the lost.

The familiar parable of the good shepherd, in which Jesus explicitly applies that title to himself, is found only in the Fourth Gospel, and hence is not certainly authentic; nevertheless there is abundant proof that he tried to be what he believed God was. He certainly cared for men as individuals. The personal emphasis is one of the most noticeable traits in Jesus. His method of social reformation was by individual uplifting, if indeed social improvements as such ever commended themselves to him. He put the individual man face to face with God with no priest or form or rite between the two. This was an advance upon the corporate idea which prevails in the Old Testament, where usually the nation is regarded as the unit, but it is clear to us that there was a great truth in the earlier conception which Jesus ignored. The personal idea of Jesus must be combined with the national idea of the Old Testament. Society and the individual develop together with reciprocal influence. As individuals grow better, society will improve, but also as society improves the environment in which its new members are born and educated, individuals will improve also. God's care is over the individual, only, however, to fashion him into a perfect member of the human brotherhood: the national, or social, and the personal ideal must be one since both are expressions of the one God, and both individual and nation are rooted in the eternal life. It follows therefore that in this particular the individualistic thought of God, as Jesus held it, needs to be complemented by the nationalistic thought found in the earlier prophets. The care of nature is that the evolution of unselfishness shall go on in every human soul and therefore is that care operative, in numberless ways, upon all. If God cares only that all men should be good his care must be for saint and sinner alike. We should have to limit on one side the idea of Jesus, who obviously extended that care into regions where it does not prevail, and we are obliged to interpret the words of Jesus into different phraseology; but when we limit the care of God to care for goodness and think of Him as working in and through nature, the belief of Jesus is seen to be true. The care of God over every soul, of evil and good alike, is manifest in nature.

We saw in the last lesson how Jesus devoted himself to seeking the outcasts and now the motive has been made clear. He sought the lost because he believed that God was seeking them. The good shepherd cannot rest while one of his sheep is out of the fold. It can hardly be denied that Jesus stopped short of the logical outcome of this thought and even taught some things inconsistent with it. That there were some doomed to eternal punishment in the outer darkness, he seems to have believed. Assuredly the great world outside of Israel did not have place in his thought; he was so much interested in the individuals whom he met daily that the all-embracing Humanity did not come into mind. But in his best moments Paul believed in the final perfection not only of all men but of the material universe as well. The Shepherd-God brings all home to perfection at last.

It is commonly said that Jesus' peculiar contribution to religious thought was his belief in the Fatherhood of God. But of course father-

hood is a word of quality, denoting a certain attitude of being. And that attitude must be the same that has been described in the parable of the shepherd. Ordinarily in the Old Testament where God is called Father, it is the nation that is his son, but Jesus taught that each individual is son of God. The Father cares for and seeks each child as the shepherd his sheep. We have approached the same truth along a less familiar road while thinking of the Shepherd-God. The ideas attaching to the fatherhood of God depend upon the kind of fatherhood a man has experienced. To a typical Roman, it is doubtful whether God the father would have been a tender and loving being. As Jesus learned from the faithful shepherd the faithfulness of God, so from Joseph he must have learned to speak so constantly of God as his father. It speaks well for Joseph that Jesus found no word that better expressed his wondrous thought of God than the name of Father.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—A shepherd is an unfamiliar object in this country—why? Do you remember any stories about shepherd-boys in Palestine, Scotland or elsewhere? How much do you suppose Jesus had seen of a shepherd's life?

The Protecting God.—What do you think of the truth of the 91st Psalm? How does the Psalm compare with a similar expression in Emerson's Essay on Worship? Have you read Mr. Gannett's sermon on "The Fall of the Sparrow"? Are our words meaningless when we speak of "The Protecting God"? Compare Jesus' idea of God's watchful care with that of the Old Testament in respect to (a) individual or national, (b) kindly or jealous, (c) particular or universal.

The Seeking God.—Do you see any difference between the two ideas of the seeking and the waiting God? How has the Orthodox church compared with the Unitarian in respect to its ideal of the seeking God? "Since Thou dost seek alway"—what does Mr. Chadwick mean by this? What is it to be found by God? Is it the same thing as finding God?

The Personal Element in Jesus.—How did Jesus compare with his contemporaries and with the earlier prophets in his individualism? Canon Fremantle has a book on "The World as Subject of Redemption"—what would Jesus have said to the idea, Paul, Isaiah, Calvin, Channing? Personal and social evolution—Is one the cause of the other or do they proceed side by side?

The Fatherhood of God.—Did Jesus mean anything more by it than we have already discovered in the "Shepherd-God"? "God is our Father"—What idea would a Roman have got from that? a Jew? a Teuton? Can you think of any children nowadays who might be afraid of God if they heard him called father?

LESSON XI.—The Kingdom Of Heaven.

Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.
—Matt. xix. 14.

Picture: Jesus and the Children. Hofmann.

What does this picture teach us of Jesus?—It reveals the sunny, genial, childlike side of his character.

There is nothing more attractive in this picture than the real human smile on the face of Jesus. He is so often referred to as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" that many good people think of him as always sad, oppressed by the evil of the world, just as if it were not possible to know sorrow and still retain gladness, to be acquainted with grief and keep serenely happy nevertheless. The genial, even humorous, side of the nature of Jesus has been overlooked. As a rule the Jews, so far as we know them from the Bible, show little capacity for humor; there is withering sarcasm in the prophets, there are fierce jests and savage puns, but gentle, playful humor is almost entirely lacking. Yet some of the parables and pithy sayings of Jesus have a touch of quiet fun which is peculiarly delicious. It is very probable that some of the things which we fail to understand in his teachings

would be perfectly clear could we hear the tone of voice in which he spoke and see the light in his eyes. It is exceedingly unfortunate when the words of a man who has a sense of humor are handed down to posterity by those who are without it. We have not time to dwell upon this side of the character of Jesus, but it must not be forgotten that, with his deep insight into the world and his scathing indignation at wrong and injustice, he was also a pleasant man, and had a marvelously taking way with children.

The incident which has given the subject of our picture has given rise to much fruitless discussion, and is often adduced in support of infant baptism. But, as we see, Jesus is not baptizing the children. It was not unusual for mothers to take their children to a distinguished rabbi that he might lay his hands upon them in blessing. The mothers meant no more than this when they came to Jesus, and he did no more than this. To use this incident as an argument in favor of infant baptism is quite unjustifiable. But it is a delightful scene in the life of Jesus and its position in the Gospel of Matthew is very interesting, following as it does immediately upon the passage in which Jesus seems to teach the superiority of celibacy.

What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God?—He meant both an inward spiritual state and also its outward expression in human society.

But our use of the passage and the picture must be to teach Jesus' idea of the kingdom of heaven. The phrase was no new one on his lips, it had a definite meaning in his time, and unless there is clear evidence to the contrary we must assume that he used it in its ordinarily accepted sense. When a phrase stands for an intensely real belief in the popular mind a man can hardly be acquitted of insincerity if in his teaching he uses it in a sense entirely different and peculiar to himself. The Jews believed that there would be sent to them from God a mighty deliverer who should exalt Israel to a position of supremacy among the nations. This is the baldest and simplest form of the idea; doubtless many believed in a resurrection of both just and unjust, or of the just Jews alone, and a general judgment after which the unjust should be destroyed, and the Jews, including those who had died before the coming of the Messiah, should reign over a world everywhere obedient to the law of the Lord. It is hard to say to what extent the apocalyptic ideas prevailed among the people, but the general belief was that the kingdom of heaven was to be established upon the earth by the coming of a heavenly Messiah for the glory of his people Israel. Of course in this conception there were ethical elements: The coming of the Messiah was dependent upon the righteousness of the people, and the law of the Lord was to be supreme. Nevertheless, the righteousness was emphatically formal rather than real, and the law of the Lord, as then understood, was chiefly concerned with ceremonialism. Moreover, the glory of the people, and its freedom from foreign rule, were more prominent than the hope of universal obedience to the ethical will of God. Not that purer and loftier ideas were not held among the people; the tendency is to paint the background of Jesus too darkly, and his own person too brightly, for the sake of the contrast. There must have been many who thought pretty much as Jesus did, but he has become the representative for history of all that higher thought, and although we know for certain that there were holy and broad-minded Pharisees, the tendency of Phariseeism is shown in the typical Pharisee, as ordinarily conceived. In history, as in biology, there are missing links; gradations disappear. There are gaps in the historical as there are in the geological record. It will be understood, therefore, that whenever Jesus and the Pharisees are put in contrast each is regarded as the representative of a tendency. And it is past dispute that the Pharisaic tendency was to emphasize the material character of the kingdom and the ceremonial features of the Law. But Jesus was interested only in simple goodness, his thought was predominantly spiritual, hence we should expect to find him laying stress upon the ethical elements of the kingdom and paying little or no heed to material sovereignty.

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."—What did those little children know or care about the scruples of the Pharisees? A child is weak, and the kingdom of heaven is not to be established by might of arms, its subjects are the poor in spirit, the weak, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The kingdoms of the world arise and continue by reason of strength in battle, but it shall not be so with the king-

dom of heaven. A child is simple, and openness not craft or diplomacy becomes a subject of the kingdom of God. A child is innocent and pure, and innocence and purity are the characteristics of the kingdom. Emphasizing these elements of the kingdom of God, Jesus naturally was led to see that where these qualities existed there the kingdom already was. So for him it was already present,—"in the midst of you," he said to the Pharisees. In this belief in the actually present kingdom of God Jesus did differ most widely from current thought.

But while the ethical character of the kingdom which Jesus made prominent existed, although obscurely, in contemporary thought, did not the emphatic elements of the popular conception exist also in him, yet subordinated to his main idea? Before answering this question we must face a difficulty with regard to our sources of knowledge concerning him. In textual criticism it is a fundamental principle that the harder reading is to be preferred to the easier; that is, a scribe is more likely to alter his text into conformity with ordinary usage than into variance with it. In higher criticism the same principle is valid: those who communicated the sayings of Jesus would be more likely to preserve such as fitted in with customary beliefs, and to change the exceptional into the ordinary. Hence when we find some idea or utterance attributed to Jesus which is unlike current belief or which popular preferences would have been apt to ignore or modify, we may be reasonably sure that it is authentic, but if we come upon the common notions also, especially if they contradict those which are established as his by their uniqueness, the natural tendency of critics is to ascribe them to popular traditions and misunderstandings of the words of Jesus. Now the constructive belief of the followers of Jesus was that he was the Messiah, consequently they would be prone to impute to him Messianic traits and to find in his career fulfillments of Messianic prophecy. That many things in the Gospels are to be accounted for in this way, no critic will deny. When, therefore, we meet with teachings concerning the kingdom of God which have the popular sound, and seem to be inconsistent with the spiritual view of the kingdom which we know Jesus held, must we not say that they are due to the later reflections of his disciples, under the guidance of mistaken notions, and cannot have been spoken by Jesus himself? Plainly there are isolated or extreme utterances which may be explained so, but besides these, interwoven in many of his parables and implied in his most characteristic sayings is so much that looks toward the current belief that it seems impossible to deny that Jesus held it without treating our records too violently. When he says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child shall in no case enter therein," how can we dislocate the sentence and say that the first half is his and that the second member has been falsely attributed to him? Is it not more historical and just to say that he had two ideas of the kingdom of God,—it was both a spiritual state to be received and an external condition to be entered? It is in the Jewish Gospel of Matthew (xxi. 43) that Jesus says "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,"—that is, the nation showing by its fruits in character that it has the spiritual kingdom of God shall receive the external sovereignty of that kingdom. These are eminently characteristic sayings of Jesus and they are too much of a piece, too closely woven, to be wrenched asunder. He did teach that the kingdom of heaven was already present, and yet, he taught his disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come." In view of these passages and others that might be cited, as well as of the parables attributed to him during his last week in Jerusalem, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that Jesus did hold a twofold conception of the kingdom of God: it was an inner spiritual state of righteousness, but it was also the realization and embodiment of righteousness in some future outward form of sovereignty; it was present, it was to come; it was to grow in the world like seed, it was to spread silently and gradually like leaven, yet the process of transformation was finally to culminate and burst forth in an outward reality. Doubtless the popular ideas were comparatively unimportant in the thought of Jesus, and his chroniclers have often grossly exaggerated them, but it seems certain that they were there. He held essentially the current belief in its entirety, only he laid supreme emphasis upon its ethical and spiritual elements which he purified and developed.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Do you know any other picture of Jesus which shows him with a smile on his face? Do the children seem afraid of Jesus? Are children ever afraid when they think of him now? Is he baptizing or blessing them? Do you suppose that after Jesus had blessed them those boys and girls grew to be bad men and women? Try to think from all you know of Jesus what he may be saying to these children? Would he tell them they must love him? is he speaking to them of heaven and hell?

The Happy Jesus.—Was Jesus a sorrowful man? If he had been, would children have come to him? Can you think of anything he said that showed a sense of humor?

The Kingdom of God.—If these little children are typical subjects of the kingdom, can it be built on power or knowledge? What sort of kingdom must it be? Is it possible for a man to keep his child-heart? Did Jesus have any other idea of the kingdom?

LESSON XII.—The Transfiguration.

Mark viii. 27–ix. 29.

The mount for vision,—but below
The paths of daily duty go,
And nobler life therein shall own
The pattern on the mountain shown.

—F. L. Hosmer.

Picture: The Transfiguration of Jesus, by Raphael (1483-1520).

The picture shows us four groups. At the base of the knob-like summit of a mountain are nine of the disciples, and an afflicted child who has been brought by his family in hope that he may be relieved by Jesus. Since the names of the apostles vary slightly in the different lists it cannot be told with certainty which of the disciples each figure represents. The easiest to make out is Thomas, whose earnest, questioning face, by far the most attractive in the picture, looks out from the very center of the group upon the demoniac child. At his left are said to be Matthew, with Simon the Zealot kneeling in front of him, and Bartholomew at their left, pointing to the child. At the extreme right of Thomas is said to be Andrew, with an open book of the law, and at his left Philip and Judas or James pointing upward to the mount where Jesus is. The two figures in the background, then, would be James of Alphæus and Judas Iscariot. The child, who in Matthew is explicitly called an epileptic, is held by his father, in whose face some students of the picture have seen an explanation of his son's affliction. In fact, with an acuteness hardly to be commended, critics have discovered that the father's family, of which a brother and sister are at the father's right, was naturally weak-minded, while the mother's family—the mother and her sister in the foreground and a brother with upraised arm behind the father—have faces of unusual intelligence and vigor. But into these minute details we need not go; it is enough to see that a child has been brought to the disciples of Jesus, whom they cannot cure, and that some of them are pointing to the mountain where Jesus and three of his disciples have gone, promising help as soon as the Master returns.

Turning to the mountain, then, we see a second group, that of the three disciples—Peter in the middle, with the two brothers James and John on his right and left. As in the Gospel narrative the three are represented as half dazed with sleep, half dazzled by the splendor that surrounds Jesus. On either side of Jesus are Moses and Elijah holding respectively books of the Law and the Prophets. The fourth group at the extreme left of the picture consists of two men, St. Lawrence and St. Julian, placed there at the request of the Cardinal de Medici, for whom the picture was painted, and commemorating his father Lorenzo and his uncle Giuliano de Medici.

What is the meaning of this scene in the life of Jesus?—Jesus, having devoted himself to death as the Messiah, went with his three most intimate friends to a mountain to pray, and there was transfigured by the glory of his noble purpose.

Luke says, characteristically, that Jesus went off alone, but for his three

disciples, to pray. He did not go to the mountain to be transfigured, but to pray, and the transfiguration is only an incident of his prayer. To understand this scene we must study it in its historical setting. In each of the three accounts it immediately follows the critical episode at Cæsarea Philippi, in which for the first time Jesus openly declared himself the Messiah. At the beginning of his career Jesus simply took up the proclamation of John—"Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*" (Matt. iv. 17). Like John he emphasized obedience to the moral law as the only method of preparation, but being of a more sunny and loving temper, his ethical ideal was more genial and tenderly sympathetic: for him love was actually the fulfilling of the law and the reality of the coming kingdom. So, as we saw last week, wherever he found love he knew that there the kingdom was already present, "within you" or "in the midst of you." But if, as he and nearly everybody else among the people believed, the Messiah was to bring in the kingdom, must not the Messiah have already come if the kingdom was present? If, then, Jesus had a twofold idea of the kingdom must he not also have had a two-fold idea of the Messiah? In the Old Testament there was the suffering Messiah of the 53d of Isaiah (originally spoken of the suffering remnant of the people, but misinterpreted) as well as the Messiah of Glory. Moreover, there are faint traces of a double Messiah even in the Talmud. We may conjecture, then, that the progress of Jesus' thought was after this fashion. At first he held like the majority of the people, to a kingdom and a Messiah that were to come, but like John he saw that plain righteousness must be the essence of the kingdom, and hence the only adequate preparation for it. Then he saw that in loving hearts the kingdom had already come and was to grow from man to man till its consummation in outward and visible sovereignty. As teacher of the new ethical ideal of tenderness and loving sympathy, through him and his words that kingdom was to increase in human hearts. Was he not then the Messiah who was to bring in the kingdom of God? So he may have reasoned, but he did not doubt that the kingdom was to be outwardly manifest and that for that, the Messiah was yet to come. Then the idea of the twofold Messiah of the Old Testament, and possibly also of a few of the people, dawned upon him with all its fatal implications. Seeing that his words were alienating the people from him, knowing the enmity of the Pharisees and the suspicious watchfulness of the Romans, he understood that for him to continue in his present path would bring him into suffering and possibly to death. But was not precisely that predicted of the Messiah? Thus knowing himself to be the bearer of the ethical ideal of the kingdom of God, and hence its real Messiah in human hearts, and discerning that to fulfill his mission as preacher would carry him into the sufferings and death predicted of the Messiah, it is not strange that at last he allowed himself to be called "the Christ," and by this acceptance of the Messiahship devoted himself to the fate of the suffering servant of Yahwe. Up to the time of Cæsarea Philippi he had never called himself the Messiah; this is evident from his reply to Peter—Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven (Matt. xvi. 17)—which would be pointless and untrue if he had ever announced himself to them as the Christ. More, he seems to have forbidden all mention of such a thing, for the disciples do not say that the people called him the Christ, although there can be no doubt whatever that many besides John had asked "Art thou he that should come?" and hoped that it was "he that should redeem Israel." But now he declares himself the Christ and from this time forth begins to teach that he "must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . and be killed and rise again the third day" (Matt. xvi. 21). As teaching Messiah of the growing spiritual kingdom he was to suffer and die, but as victorious Messiah of the consummated, realized kingdom of God he was to return again in power and great glory. *Jesus believed himself the twofold Messiah of the twofold kingdom of God.*

Now we understand why the transfiguration followed directly after the declaration at Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus dreaded death and shrank from it like any other man, but believing himself the Messiah he faced death inevitable. His stern rebuke to Peter shows that the apostle's words were a dangerous re-enforcement to what he felt to be the weak, cowardly elements in his own nature that recoiled from suffering and death. That he might gain complete mastery over himself he goes to the mountain to pray. In his prayer vic-

tory is won, and stern duty takes on "the Godhead's most benignant grace." Stripping the story of all its legendary accretions, we have to do with a common human experience that may be repeated in every one of us. Duty taken up into the mount of prayer ("looked at from the highest point of view," in Emerson's phrase) is transfigured into radiant joy. The glory on the mount shone in the face of a man who had seen on the face of duty that commanded him to death the loving smile of the Eternal.

Returning from the mount, strong in his joyful determination, Jesus finds the scribes wrangling with his disciples. If Raphael had shown us the scribes in his picture he would have given us a most dramatic and instructive contrast. The disciples of Jesus and of Moses wrangle on the plain, but those who rise to the holy mount see there Jesus and Moses in loving communion. The disciples have failed to cure the epileptic child. As we look at this picture, it may be that we ask impatiently—Why is Jesus there in glory while he is needed so much down on the plain? What right has a man to use in meditation and prayer hours which might be expended in relieving urgent suffering? But it is with power received on the heights of prayer that Jesus takes away the pain and misery before which his disciples are powerless. "This kind goeth not forth save by prayer."

The interpretation of this event in the life of Jesus will, doubtless, seem strange, because the theory of Jesus' idea of the Messiahship upon which it is based is novel. The commentators who are classed as "Liberal" usually deny altogether that Jesus called himself the Messiah and reject unqualifiedly the notion that he believed he was to return at the "consummation of the age" in the realized kingdom of God. But while such an idea of Jesus may perhaps keep him on a higher intellectual and spiritual level it requires a violence in dealing with our sources that seems uncalled for and summary. We have tried to show how the two ideas of the kingdom of God came naturally to the mind of Jesus and dwelt there; we have also seen how the conception of a double mission of the Messiah attached itself naturally to these two ideas of the kingdom; from this point of view his belief in the second advent is perfectly explicable and reasonable. Thus we keep closely to our records without violating historic probabilities. If this thought of Jesus removes him farther from our minds, it brings him indefinitely nearer to our hearts—a great pure soul entangled by the misconceptions of his time in an idea of the Messiahship which betrayed him to his death.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—How could you tell from the picture that the scene is laid on a mountain? Can you pick out the apostles? Why did Raphael introduce the two figures on the summit at the left of the picture? What do you think of the picture as a work of art?

The Vision on the Mount.—What event preceded the transfiguration? What relation does it bear to it? Did Jesus think himself the Messiah? What did the Messiahship mean to him? What do you suppose really happened on the mount? Do the three disciples in the picture look as if they could tell accurately what they saw and heard?

The Duty on the Plain.—What did Jesus find when he came back after his night of prayer? Why were the disciples weak? Why was Jesus strong? How much of this whole story do you think is true? How much of it is true to human experience?

LESSON XIII.—The Beginning of the End.

Matt. xxi. 1-17.

The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring.

—Bayard Taylor.

Picture: Cleansing of the Temple, by Hofmann.

Can this be the same man whom we saw in the picture of two weeks ago, then fondling little children with tender smile, now swinging a scourge with stern, threatening face? The voice that was so gentle when he spoke to the penitent vibrates now with strong indignation. He who was tender with little children is brave in the presence of wrong, and he who loved

and pitied the outcasts is daring enough when a perilous deed of righteousness must be done.

What is the story of the picture?—At the end of his last journey to Jerusalem Jesus entered the city in triumph and drove the traffickers from the temple.

To understand this picture we must review the last few days of Jesus' life. Soon after the transfiguration, Jesus set out for Jerusalem to attend the Passover feast. He did not travel alone, for many pilgrims were taking the same journey, and in all the Galilean caravans there was suppressed excitement over the thrilling intimations that came from the disciples of Jesus. However it may have originated the Passover had become the great feast of deliverance; it looked backward to the miracle by which God led his people out of Egypt, and it looked forward, also, to the future Messiah who should work an even greater deliverance for the people of God. At no other time were the signs of Roman authority so odious and Messianic hopes so ardent. Hence a mere hint that the Messiah was actually at hand, there he was with his twelve disciples, was enough at Passover season to kindle the wildest hopes and raise the most desperate valor. Late in the afternoon, the company of which Jesus is central figure reaches the little village of Bethany on the eastern side of Olivet; here Jesus stays over night in the house of his friends, Lazarus, Mary and Martha, while the excited pilgrims hasten over the hills to enter Jerusalem before nightfall. In the morning Jesus himself, with his disciples, starts for the city. His friends are wildly excited, for he who has declared himself the Messiah is on his way to the city of David; they run before him shouting and praising God. Following the road that leads over the shoulder of Olivet they catch sight of the city and the temple glorious with marble and gold. As with louder shouts of rejoicing they rush down into the valley, those who had preceded him the night before and have been watching for his coming, swarm out of the city gates with triumphant cries and hurry to meet him, as at the feast of Tabernacles the city dwellers went forth to greet approaching pilgrims. The two companies meet, and when Jesus is seen riding on an ass's foal, as if in designed fulfillment of an ancient prophecy concerning the Messiah, the excitement turns into frenzy. Tearing branches from the trees that line the road and casting their garments down to carpet his way, the swaying crowd bears Jesus along into Jerusalem. Straight to the temple he goes, and there, with the almost delirious multitudes at his back, he breaks in upon the chaffering venders and thieving money-changers with a passionate scorn that stops not short of violence. Overwhelmed by the sudden in-rushing of such a tumultuous mob, overawed by the personality of Jesus, always impressive but never more than when, as now, he was filled with passionate indignation, the desecrators of the temple made haste to escape. Then Jesus went back over the hill to pass the night in the quiet home of his friends.

Why did Jesus allow this demonstration?—Because he was convinced that he was the Messiah, and therefore would enter Jerusalem as the Messiah should.

This "triumphant entry into Jerusalem" is the most puzzling scene in the life of Jesus. It seems so utterly unlike him that we are disposed to believe it cannot actually have happened. Moreover, there are discrepancies in the accounts: (a) According to Mark the purification of the temple took place on the day after the "triumphal entry," according to Matthew and Luke on the same day. In this Mark is clearly wrong, for this act requires for its successful accomplishment just such a state of excitement in Jesus and his followers as the events of "Palm Sunday" imply. (b) In Matthew's narrative there is an odd misunderstanding of the prophecy quoted from Zechariah, which has led the author or editor into a gross absurdity that is cleverly covered up by the Revised Version. In the original passage in Zechariah only one animal is referred to—"riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." But "Matthew" mistook the common Hebrew idiom, and hence introduces two animals, upon both of which in some unexplained way Jesus rides into Jerusalem. (c) In the Fourth Gospel is a story like this in the Synoptists', only it is placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry instead of at the end of it (John ii. 13-22). Yet if the purification of the temple really occurred at all it is far more natural to place it in the setting of the Synop-

tists than in that of John. To one who believes that Jesus never proclaimed himself Messiah at all, or Messiah only in a purely spiritual sense, this episode must appear totally incredible. But in these lessons we have adopted a different view, one of the merits of which is that it makes the event of Palm Sunday perfectly explicable. Jesus had avowed himself the Messiah, and was now coming to Jerusalem fully expecting to fulfill there the prediction relating to the suffering Messiah. But he was the Messiah, and therefore he would assume his rightful honor and authority. Keim quotes a passage from the Talmud, of uncertain date, to the effect that if the Israelites are good, Messiah will come in the clouds of heaven, but if they are not good, then riding on an ass. It is unlikely that such a saying would have arisen after the time of Jesus, and it may be, therefore, that this interpretation of the passage in Zechariah was in the mind of Jesus when he mounted the ass's colt. As Messiah both by public declaration and by symbolic act he would ride into Jerusalem, though knowing perfectly well that this testimony would contribute to bring about his death. As Messiah, too, he had the right to put the substance of his preaching into a conspicuous object lesson, and purify the temple, his Father's house, which the hucksters were desecrating. If we accept the idea of Jesus' belief in himself as the Messiah, this public display becomes entirely comprehensible and the undertone of pathos heard in all the events of the day is perfectly natural.

Why did Jesus cleanse the temple?—Because he felt that the abuses which he attacked were opposed to the true worship of God.

After all, it is not to be wondered at that he should have found in the temple what he did. When worshipers from abroad wished to make their money offering to the temple, it must be not in foreign but in Jewish coin. Hence there was need of money-changers, and where could they be stationed more conveniently than in the outer court of the temple? If animals were to be offered in sacrifice, where could the rich man more easily procure his lamb, or the poor man his doves, than in the temple where the offering was to be made? So presumably the custom arose of having money-changers and venders of sacrificial offerings in the sacred precincts.

The cries of the animals, the noise of buyer and seller, and above all the sharp and unjust bargaining which seems to have been practiced, had undoubtedly offended many a man besides Jesus; probably he himself had felt the iniquity of it before, but now he had come to the temple as the Messiah, and therefore it was incumbent upon him to remove the abuses which he found. It was therefore a natural outburst of indignation, to which he gave readier expression because he deemed himself the Messiah.

In a previous lesson we learned that John, the priest's son, disgusted by such scenes as this which met Jesus' eye, had withdrawn to the wilderness with the question of Micah in his heart, and there had learned thoroughly the answer of the ancient prophet (Micah vi. 6-8). Jesus had reached the same general position as John by a revolt from the Pharisees instead of the priests. But now he too has set himself against the priestly as well as against the scribal tendencies, and the priests as well as the Pharisees are bitter against him. Moreover, Rome could not tolerate the presence of one who claimd to be a Messiah, least of all at Jerusalem in Passover week. So by this act Jesus awoke at once the jealous hate of the priests and the suspicion of the Romans, as he had previously angered the Pharisees, and so himself made inevitable the death which he anticipated.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Can you think of any other heroes whose characters have exemplified our Golden Verse? What is the scene of this picture, the time? What authority is there for representing Jesus as armed with "a scourge of small cords."

The Entry Into Jerusalem.—What are the difficulties in the account? Was it like Jesus to prepare or countenance such a dramatic display? Do you think that he really did go into Jerusalem in the way described?

The Purification of the Temple.—Why were money-changers and sellers of animals in the temple at all? Whereabouts in the temple were they? Was the temple built like one of our churches? What kind of building was it?

The Temple of God.—What is the real

temple of God? What is its inner shrine and what are its outer courts? Can there be real worship within while the outer courts are not pure? What would a purification of the temple mean for us?

LESSON XIV.—The Last Supper.

Matt. xxvi. 17-30.

The holy supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need.
—Lowell.

Picture: The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

The picture is too well known to require explanation. Its anachronisms also are so manifest that they need not be dwelt upon. For the table and its appointments Leonardo was evidently satisfied with the model furnished in the refectory of the Milan convent on whose wall the picture was painted, and did not feel obliged to attempt a reproduction of the actual scene in a Jerusalem upper-chamber. Moreover, he has erred in representing the meal as taken by day, for although the moon was always at full when the Passover was eaten, the light on the landscape seen through the windows must be of the sun, and the episode upon which the picture is based cannot have occurred till long after sunset. Jesus has just spoken of his betrayal and the various emotions which the announcement called forth are beautifully shown on the faces of the apostles. It is remarkable that John, on the right of Jesus, shows neither surprise nor indignation, but alone of all the apostles has an expression like that on the face of Jesus himself.

What was the Passover?—A Jewish festival in memory of the deliverance from Egypt.

It seems to have been a very ancient Semitic custom to offer the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice (*cf.* Ex. xxii. 30). Since "in Arabia all cattle, small and great, yean in the season of the spring pasture," the sacrifices would be most numerous at that season of the year; and because originally sacrifice was a communal rather than an individual matter, there would be a disposition to offer all the sacrifices of a community at the same time. The festival seems to have been at this stage in its history when the Jews left Egypt (Ex. x.), and thus the spring festival took on historical associations. In the land of Canaan, and perhaps earlier in Egypt, the first fruits of the soil were devoted to the god of the land. This form of sacrifice could not arise till the people had passed from the nomadic to the agricultural life. The season of the first-fruits could be definitely fixed and the general festival came to be known as the feast of unleavened bread. With the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, we find the more ancient spring festival of the firstlings attached to that of the first-fruits and its historical character becomes prominent. The feast of the Passover, then, originated long before the exodus from which it received its historical stamp, and was subsequently allied to the harvest festival of the first-fruits. In the time of Jesus all the festivals had lost their primitive character, and the Passover had undergone the greatest transformation, being thought of only as an historical reminder of the escape from bondage.

What was the Last Supper?—A simple rite, instituted by Jesus during the Passover meal, that the memory of him might be kept by his disciples.

Our sources do not agree about the last meal which Jesus ate with his disciples. The Synoptists say plainly that it was the regular Passover meal (Matt. xxvi. 19; Mark xiv. 16; Luke xxii. 8, 15), but John is equally positive that the Passover was not to be celebrated till the evening of Friday (xviii. 28; xix. 14). It is hard to decide which account is authentic. It is against the Fourth Gospel that it represents Jesus from the beginning as the lamb of God, and hence would have been likely to find appropriateness in the synchronism of his death with the slaughtering of the Passover lambs in the temple—yet it was not the Passover lamb that took away the sin of the world (John i. 28). On the other hand, the Synoptists preserve the tradition that Pilate, following a usual custom, offered to re-

lease a prisoner at the feast, and gave the people their choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Inasmuch as one of the objects of releasing a captive would be that he might keep the Passover with his family, it may be that even in the Synoptists there is a tradition in harmony with John's. While the question must be left indeterminate, it is probably safer to follow the Synoptists and hold this the Passover meal.

In that case, the events of the day would have been about as follows. Between three o'clock and five, the lambs were slain in the temple. In the great crowd of Jews that thronged the temple were two disciples of Jesus (Luke says Peter and John), carrying a lamb to be slaughtered. Earlier in the day they had found a householder whose upper chamber was given them for the evening. "It may be mentioned that it was customary to allow to strangers the use gratis of the necessary room, with articles of furniture, especially with cushions and tables; in return for which it was usual to leave behind the skin of the Passover lamb and the earthen vessels that had been employed." [Keim, Jesus of Nazara, v. p. 280.] Thither the disciples carried the slain lamb. Probably everything else needed for the feast had already been provided. On the evening before, the family whose room had been placed at their disposal began to remove the leaven from the house, and by noon of the Passover day not a particle of leaven was to be found. "To them would fall also the duty of baking in the early morning the pure unleaven *mazzot*, the cake of wheaten meal, as well as the preparation of the *charoset*—the thick batter of fruit flavored with vinegar and cinnamon—and the bitter herbs." At evening Jesus came with the rest of the apostles and the Passover began.

In the course of the meal, possibly near the end of the feast and just before the time of the thanksgiving, the blessing and the drinking of the third cup, Jesus took one of the wheaten cakes and breaking off one piece after another gave a fragment to each of his disciples, and then when the third cup was brought he passed it to his friends in turn, bidding them think of him as often as they broke bread or drank wine in the future. It is possible that he meant only to make his memory a part of each subsequent Passover feast, but from the history of the ceremony in the church it is more probable that he expected the apostles to keep together, and wished them to think of him at every common meal.

How was the Eucharist observed in the early church?—It formed part of an ordinary meal in a gathering of the whole church, and was taken in memory of Jesus and in hope of his speedy return.

The earliest account is found in 1 Cor. xi. 17-26, which shows how the ceremony was observed in Paul's time. As the service of commemoration was separated gradually from the usual supper, the former was called specifically the Eucharist (blessing or thanksgiving, 1 Cor. xi. 24), and the latter was called the Agape or Love-feast; but the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" comprehends both in the word Eucharist, Ignatius in the word Love Feast (*cf.* Teaching, etc., Schaff's ed., pp. 57-62). "Rich and poor, master and slave, sat down together once a week on the same footing of brotherhood in Christ and partook of bread, fish and wine." During this meal bread was broken, wine was passed and prayers were offered in memory of Jesus and in hope of his second coming. Out of this beautiful and significant service, which is evidently only commemorative, have grown the Catholic celebration of the Mass and the Protestant "Communion," both of which are very far from the intention of Jesus.

Exactly what Jesus did mean by the rite can be gathered only from his own words, but these differ materially in the various accounts. Yet all agree in the following particulars:

(a) Jesus called the bread his body and the wine his blood (Matt. xxvi. 26, 27; Mark xiv. 22-24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; *cf.* also John vi. 56). This has been aptly called, "The last parable of Jesus." Can we not imagine how the idea occurred to him? He knew that for him death was at the door, and as the meal proceeded the gloom grew thicker around him. The red wine in the cup suggested the blood he was to shed—"See," he said, "my blood!" And as he solemnly broke the bread—"My body broken!" Only those who are utterly unable to appreciate the tender mysticism of Jesus, and his invariable habit of seeing analogies, and expressing them in parables, could fail to understand his mood and his pathetic words.

(b) Jesus looked forward to a future reunion with his disciples in the kingdom of God (Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark xiv.

25; Luke xxii. 18; 1 Cor. xi. 26?). This is a striking feature of the ceremony in the early church: it looked backward, to be sure, but it also looked forward to the time when Jesus should come again. In the "Teaching" the service closes with a triumphant ringing cry "Maranatha"—the Lord cometh.

(c) The mention of a covenant in connection with the cup. All accounts agree that Jesus believed that his blood was to be shed *for a purpose*, as symbol or seal of a covenant (1 Cor. xi. 25; Luke xxii. 20; Mark xiv. 24; Matt. xxvi. 28) and, Matthew adds, for the remission of sins (xxvi. 28). Believing, as Jesus did, that he must die in Jerusalem to end his first mission as Messiah, it is only natural that he should have questioned as to the meaning of that death. Why must the Messiah suffer and die? May we not suppose that as he recalled the teaching of Isaiah that the servant of Yahwe suffered for the sins of the people, and as he thought of the system of ideas represented by the lamb before him, the idea of sacrifice came to him as a possible explanation of his death? Surely those who had believed in him as Messiah must have entered into a new relation with God by reason of that belief, and at his second coming they should inherit the promises. But they must remain faithful to their belief during the dark days of separation, they must be mindful of the covenant, and therefore this wine, shall be to them a reminder. The thought of Jesus on this matter we cannot see clearly, perhaps it was not clear even to himself; but we may be certain that he believed his death was decreed by God for the good of others, and it is possible that in the idea of sacrifice either as seal of a covenant or as a means for the remission of sins (*cf.* Heb. x. 11-28) he found an explanation of his predetermined sufferings, and to keep his disciples faithful, bade them think of him and of the relation to God upon which they had entered by belief in him whenever they partook of wine, the symbol of his blood shed in their behalf.

"And having sung an hymn they went out unto the Mount of Olives." The hymn was from the Psalter (Psalms cxv.-cxviii.), and should be read in the class. Also it is urgently recommended that the prayers in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, chaps. ix. and x., be read also. The Teaching has been published by the American Unitarian Association for free distribution, and may be had on application. For a modern idea of the communion, see "Robert Elsmere," chap. xlix.

The observance of the Lord's Supper had three results in the early church:

(a) It leveled distinctions of race and class by bringing all together in a common meal. This must have been of especial importance when the church consisted of both Jews and Gentiles.

(b) It fostered personal loyalty to Jesus as the embodiment of the new ideals.

(c It kept alive the hope of his return.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—What can you find out about Leonardo da Vinci as painter, mathematician, man of science, inventor? The anachronisms of the picture. What is the significance of the overturned salt-cellar in front of Judas?

The Passover.—Tell the story of the festival and learn what you can about the way it was observed in the time of Jesus. Was this last meal a Passover? Do you think of any other nature-festivals which have gathered historical associations—Christmas, for instance?

The Lord's Supper.—What is the meaning of Lowell's lines? Can we observe the rite without superstition or misunderstanding? Would there be any benefit in it? Did Jesus or his disciples think that it would be preserved so many hundred years?

LESSON XV.—Jesus on Trial.

John xviii. 12—xix. 16.

One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind.
—Lowell.

Picture: Ecce Homo, by Rembrandt (1607-1669).

The place is the palace of Herod the Great, on the west of the temple and connected with it by a viaduct, which was occupied by the Roman governor on his visit to Jerusalem. The time is Friday morning after the scourging of Jesus and just before the final giving of sentence. About the shoulders of Jesus is the purple robe given him in

derision by the soldiers, and upon his head is the crown of thorns. The presence of a great crowd is shown, not merely by the sea of faces in front, but also by the gesticulations of the man who occupies an elevated position near the archway, and is evidently reporting the proceedings to a multitude that can neither see nor be seen. "The crowd are not even looking at Jesus, for Rembrandt well knew that such a multitude, in this state of violent excitement, would be incapable of fixing their attention upon anything. One face alone has apparently caught the suspicion that this is no common culprit. It is a hard-featured soldier near him who is wrapped in thought. These are the real Jews, and this is the real Pilate—vacillating, bending in indecision, with his expressive outstretched, self-excusing hands and false, temporizing face,—who has no chance before them. It is not so much the clutch on his robe by one, or the glaring eye and furious open mouth of another, or the old Jew hoary in wickedness, who threatens him with the fury of the multitude; but it is the dreadful earnest face, upturned and riveted on his, of the figure kneeling before him—it is the tightly compressed lips of that man who could not entreat more persistently for his own life than he is pleading for the death of the prisoner. Rembrandt has given to this figure the dignity, because the power of a malignant delusion; horribly fine." (Life of our Lord in Art, by Jameson, ii. p. 95.)

By whom was Jesus tried?—According to the accounts Jesus was tried before the Jewish courts, before Herod of Galilee, and also before Pilate, the Roman governor.

The story of the trial of Jesus varies so much in the different records that a detailed statement is necessary.

(*a*) Before Annas. This hearing is mentioned only by John (xviii. 12-23). Annas had been high priest (6-15 A. D.), and, although no longer in office, was a man of great prominence. Caiaphas, the actual high priest, was his son-in-law. The account in John, however, is very puzzling: in verse 24 we must read "sent" as in the Revised Version, not "had sent" as in the Authorized Version; therefore the preceding narrative can relate only to an examination before Annas, who is called erroneously the high priest. John has only an allusion to Caiaphas, knows nothing of any meeting of the Sanhedrin, or indeed of any Jewish judicial tribunal, and alone among our sources makes mention of Roman soldiers at the arrest of Jesus. It may be true that Jesus was examined by Annas, but the account of that examination, given in John, cannot be authentic.

(*b*) A nocturnal meeting of the Sanhedrin at the house of Caiaphas (Matt. xxvi. 57-63; Mark xiv. 53-65). This was not a merely preliminary hearing, as it is often represented, but Matthew and Mark would clearly have us believe that it was a regular, decisive meeting of the Sanhedrin. Yet everything is against this view: (1) The *place* of meeting—that the chief court of Israel held this session not in its regular place of meeting ("upon the temple mount itself, on the western side of the inclosing wall"—Schuerer), but in the high priest's house, is quite incredible. (2) The *time*. It was contrary to the Jewish custom that the court should be held by night, and least of all would a session be held in the night during the early part of which the Passover was celebrated. (3) The *forms* of proceeding are un-Jewish. The traditional forms observed in capital cases are wonderfully scrupulous in favor of the prisoner: reasons for acquittal were to be heard before those for conviction, after speaking in favor of the accused no one was allowed to speak against him, although the converse was permissible. The student disciples were allowed to speak for, but never against, the defendant. A sentence of acquittal could be given on the same day with the trial, but one of condemnation could not be pronounced until the next day. Great care was exercised also in polling the court, that its younger members might not be influenced by the decisions of those who were older, etc. (Schuerer, 1, ii. p. 194). Not one of these forms was observed in the trial of Jesus as related by Matthew and Mark, nor can it be said that in hate the Sanhedrin deliberately set aside its established usages. The probabilities are altogether against such a supposition, and we are forced to conclude that these reports of a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin are unhistorical.

(*c*) A morning meeting of the Sanhedrin (Matt. xxvii. 1; Mark xv. 1; Luke xxii. 66-71). Matthew and Mark merely mention the fact that in the morning a second meeting of the San-

hedrin was held. Luke, however, knows only of this session, but most of the objections already presented in (*b*) are valid against his narrative also.

Singularly, the story of the Fourth Gospel commends itself here as superior to that in the Synoptists. There are, of course, unauthentic details due to the author's, or editor's, exalted conception of Jesus: in Gethsemane, there is no human agony, the traitor's kiss is omitted; the company sent to arrest him are overawed by the majesty of his person and fall to the ground before him—yet here, as elsewhere, the Fourth Gospel seems to show signs of a perfectly historical tradition which has been worked over and put into form by another hand. There is a good deal of evidence to support the belief that in our Fourth Gospel we have a genuine Johannine tradition, which has been freely dealt with by a disciple of the apostle. It seems quite unlikely that there was a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, and John is probably right in describing only an informal examination before a few chief men of the Sadducean party. Moreover John is probably right in introducing Roman soldiers at the time of the arrest. In the early years of the church, when its peace depended upon Rome, the tendency was to shift the blame for the death of Jesus from the Romans to the Jews. But we are compelled to believe that there can have been no formal action taken against him by the Jewish court. The truth probably is that a few of the leaders among the Sadducees, having no faith in Messianic ideas at all, angry at Jesus because of his conduct in the temple on "Palm Sunday," apprehensive of a popular Messianic outbreak at the Passover time, and desirous of gaining favor with Pilate, co-operated with the Romans in causing the arrest and death of Jesus. The so-called Jewish trials were nothing more than informal examinations conducted probably by Annas, Caiaphas and a few others. With this explanation of the alleged Jewish trials we may pass rapidly over the others.

(*d*) The first trial before Pilate (Luke xxiii. 1-7). This hearing was cut short by the mention of Herod's name, and Luke relates that Pilate, partly to rid himself of the responsibility for condemning a man in whom he found no fault, and partly to make friends with Herod, sent Jesus immediately to the tetrarch who had put to death John the Baptist.

(*e*) Trial before Herod. Luke alone knows of this trial (*cf.* Acts x. 27), and it seems to be only an attempt to implicate the Jews more deeply in responsibility for the death of Jesus.

(*f*) The second trial before Pilate. If we reject the Herod trial we may study the trial before Pilate as a whole. There are two points wherein all our authorities agree.

(1) Pilate did not wish to put Jesus to death (Matt. xxvii. 23; Mark xv. 10, 14; Luke xxiii. 4, 14, 22; John xviii. 38, xix. 4, 6, 12; Acts iii. 13). This is not incredible on the face of it, for when Pilate actually saw Jesus, who had probably been represented to him as a dangerous insurgent, he must have recognized at once that this was no mad stirrer-up of insurrections, and, therefore, his Roman instinct for justice would naturally lead him to discharge a simple, inoffensive man. Yet the accounts of his reluctance are certainly exaggerated; the story of his wife's warning dream and of his washing his hands that the responsibility might be transferred symbolically from himself to the Jews, can hardly be deemed historical. It is not likely, either, that he hoped by bringing Jesus before the people after his scourging to arouse pity for him. If Jesus was led forth at all it was probably intended as an insult to the Jew—sBehold your king!

Pilate was a hard, cruel man, and it was only his love of justice that prompted his wish to release Jesus, but the outcries of the mob and their threats (John xix. 12) were too much for him and he yielded. In face of the accounts in the Synoptists that Jesus was silent before Pilate, answering only "Thou sayest" to his formal questions, we must reject the long and impressive interviews in John. Pilate was not awed by his prisoner; he saw in him only a quiet, harmless man.

(2) Pilate gave the Jews their choice between Barabbas and Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 15-26; Matt. xv. 6-15; Luke xxiii. 18-25; John xviii. 38-40; Acts iii. 24). It is not probable that any great number of people accompanied Jesus to the judgment seat of Pilate, but while the trial was going on in the open air, a crowd appeared (Mark xv. 8), asking that the usual custom of the feast be observed and a prisoner be released. Thinking to find an easy way out of his perplexity, Pilate proposed to set the "King of the Jews" at liberty, but

the people knew comparatively little about Jesus, and there was a prisoner upon whom their hearts were set—Barabbas, whom they honored as a patriot (Mark xv. 7). Therefore Pilate's purpose was thwarted.

What was the charge against Jesus? — That he declared himself the Christ.

Matthew (xxvi. 60, 61) and Mark (xiv. 56-59) relate that Jesus was accused of threatening predictions concerning the destruction of the temple, but the latter adds that in this particular the testimonies did not agree. According to all the Synoptists, however, the decisive question was, Art thou the Christ, the Son of God? and it was Jesus' affirmative answer, coupled with a prophecy of his future glory, which settled his fate so far as his Jewish examiners were concerned. Those who deny that Jesus believed himself the Messiah, deny consistently the accuracy of this report; but from the view adopted in these lessons it stands unimpeached. Before Pilate the same charge is urged,—that he professed himself the Christ, the King of the Jews. We have seen that he had spoken and acted as the Christ, that his arrest was brought about by the co-operation of a few leaders among the Sadducees with the Romans on account of this claim, and therefore it is entirely natural that this should have been the charge on which he was condemned. If he had been a popular hero like Barabbas, ready to take the sword, he might have had a popular following which would have made his arrest and execution dangerous, but he was comparatively unknown in Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 10), and therefore the people were little interested in his fate. He was condemned to death.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Does the face of Pilate exhibit the traits of his character as we know them? Do you like the face of Jesus in the picture? How has Rembrandt conveyed the impression of a great multitude? What is the scene of the picture? The time?

The Trial of Jesus.—What are the reasons for not believing that he was given a formal trial before the Sanhedrin? How was his arrest brought about? Recount the trials mentioned in the Gospels. What was the trial before Annas and Caiaphas? What are the two certain facts about the trial before Pilate? Why did Pilate wish to release Jesus? Why did the people prefer Barabbas to Jesus?

The Charge Against Jesus.—On what ground would the Sadducees object to Jesus as the Messiah? The Pharisees? What would be the attitude of the Romans toward one who avowed himself the Christ? Did Jesus really believe himself to be the Messiah, and if so, how did he understand the term?

Last and Most Important Question of All.—Is it just to say that the Jews as a people were directly responsible for the death of Jesus? Was there an indirect responsibility?

LESSON XVI.—The Death of Jesus.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

—Lowell.

Picture: The Crucifixion, by Michel Angelo (1457-1564).

The picture is as painful to see as the lesson is to study. It represents Jesus after death while darkness still covers the land. The right hand has the conventional gesture of blessing, the crown of thorns is still about the head. At the foot of the cross lies a skull, partly to denote the place of crucifixion—Golgotha, place of a skull—but mainly to illustrate an ancient legend. Tradition relates that Jesus, the second Adam, was crucified over the grave of the first Adam, thus signifying that as the latter brought all woe into the world by taking the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so the former brought all blessing to men by means of the tree of the holy cross. It will be noticed that "the blood which brought salvation" is trickling down

upon the skull. The cross is the Roman cross, with four ends, and the letters on the placard nailed to the upright stand for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. This picture has been chosen in preference to others because it shows the crucified in loneliness and darkness.

How did Jesus die?—He was crucified near Jerusalem on Friday of Passover week.

The place of crucifixion cannot now be determined. Perhaps the weight of opinion is in favor of the "northern extension of the Temple Hill . . . . Seen from the Mount of Olives and other points of good view, this hill looks strikingly like a skull with a great eyeless socket" (Broadus). The name Golgotha, an Aramaic word, is interpreted to mean "the place of a skull" (Matt. xxvii. 33) and was probably given because of the shape of the hill. The name Calvary (Luke xxiii. 33 A. V.) is due to an Englishing of the Latin word Calvaria, found in the Latin Bible, which means skull.

After Jesus had been condemned by Pilate and scourged by the Roman soldiers he was led forth with two others, malefactors, to the place of crucifixion. As was customary, he was compelled to bear part of his cross, probably the transverse piece or pieces, and to pass through a frequented part of the town as a warning to evil doers. On the way he seems to have sunk under the burden, and a certain Cyrenian, Simon by name, whose sons were afterwards well known in the church (Mark xv. 21), was impressed into service and obliged to shoulder the cross. To a multitude of women who followed with wailings and lamentations, apparently not because they knew or cared for him personally, but only because he was doomed to a horrible death, Jesus spoke of the days that were coming, in which fearful calamities should befall the city. After the arrival at Golgotha preparations were speedily made for the execution. The upright was set in place while the victim was bound or nailed to the transverse beam lying on the ground. Then with ropes and ladders the crosspiece was lifted into place and made fast by nails or cords. The body was horsed on a little peg, that its unsupported weight might not tear the hands away from the nails. The feet were spiked to the cross, and there the victim was left to die. Over his head was placed the board, which had been borne before him on the death walk, inscribed with his name and offense. According to the Fourth Gospel this was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Although the precise words are not reported (since no two evangelists agree concerning them), the accusation is unmistakable, "King of the Jews." There seems to have been a kindly usage that the condemned should be given a stupefying draught (provided, it is said, by certain women of Jerusalem) to deaden his agony, but of this Jesus would not drink (Matt. xxvii. 34). Was it because he would not creep past death, but taste the whole of it, "fare like his peers, the heroes of old" (Browning's Prospice), or because he had a faint hope that at the supreme moment divine assistance might come? That he refused to lose consciousness accounts for the tradition of

THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.

(*a*) "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do." It is unfortunate that there should be doubt about the genuineness and authenticity of this utterance. It is found only in Luke, and even there some manuscripts omit it. Moreover, it is found, with no variant, in Acts vii. 60, ascribed to Stephen; and tradition relates that James, brother of Jesus, died with a similar prayer. It is possible that the prayer of Stephen was put into the lips of Jesus because it was so tenderly beautiful, and also because it fell in with Luke's idea of relieving the Romans, so far as possible, from the guilt of the death of Jesus.

(*b*) "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). According to Matthew and Mark both "robbers" who were crucified with him joined in the ridicule arising from Roman soldiers and those who despised his Messianic claims; but Luke has heard that one of the robbers afterward repented and begged to be remembered by Jesus when he should come into his kingdom, and that in reply Jesus gave the second word from the cross. It is altogether improbable that in such circumstances one of the malefactors believed in Jesus as the Christ, yet it may be that the request proffered in derision was taken by Jesus in earnest. There is a pathetic undertone in the answer of Jesus which is almost invariably overlooked. It reads as if he were wavering in his belief concerning himself. As to the kingdom, of that I say nothing, to-day you and I will be together in the place of departed spirits, so

much I can promise. As a Jew the malefactor probably expected to enter Paradise, and Jesus knew that he would be there too, but of the future he declined to speak. This word from the cross was the beginning of that awful loneliness and doubt which are to find expression presently in the bitter "Eloi."

(*c*) "Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother!" (John xix. 26, 27). Jesus had not seen very much of his mother during his public ministry. She had watched his course with surprise and alarm; he had refused to heed her restraint and had spoken slightingly of human relationships. Let us confess frankly that Jesus' treatment of his mother detracts from our ideal of his character. It is not noble to spurn earthly relationships as Jesus is reported to have done (Matt. xii. 46-50). But now, as his dreams of Messiahship are fading away, the simple, tender, human feeling of the home in Nazareth comes back, and, forsaken by his disciples, he sees his mother there, weeping near the cross. She has not forsaken him; he might have known that she never would. And so he commends her to the loving care of the disciple John, the only one who has come to the cross, and him to her motherly care. It is hard to understand why he should have taken her from the care of her own sons and daughters, but possibly knowing them he was convinced that she would be happier with John than with her own children. This would gain in plausibility if we could be sure that Mary had no children of her own besides Jesus, and that "his brethren" were sons of Joseph by a former marriage.

(*d*) "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34). This is the one dying cry of Jesus which seems to be past dispute. And how heart-rending it is! A man who has always been sure of God, who has felt his presence everywhere and always, and trusted gladly in his loving care, now feels in his extremest need that his God had forsaken him. *Jesus has lost his God.* It may be sufficient to say that this feeling of utter loneliness and dismay was due entirely to his great physical suffering, but great as his bodily agony must have been there is in this heart-broken cry a hint of infinitely greater mental torture. Did he now realize, or feel, that this Messianic belief of his had been only a dream? that this death which had seemed to him so certainly the will of God was really not His will at all? Is this the agonized cry of a disillusionized man? One shrinks from such an idea because of the horror it suggests, but it may be true nevertheless.

(*e*) "I thirst." (John xx 28.) Matthew and Mark relate that the Roman soldiers, not understanding Aramaic, mistook Eli or Eloi for the name of Elijah, upon whom they thought he was calling for assistance. It would have been out of harmony with John's conception of Jesus to put such a despairing cry into his lips, and therefore he has the vinegar, or cheap sour wine, offered to Jesus in response to a particular request and fulfillment of prophecy (Psalms lxix. 21).

(*f*) "It is finished." (John xix. 30.) As one who has accomplished his work and has power to lay down his life Jesus majestically dies. Such is the picture in the Fourth Gospel, but Matthew and Mark know only that after the "Eloi" Jesus gave one long and bitter cry and then died. The Synoptists are decidedly to be preferred to John.

(*g*) "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii. 46.) We can but hope that this was spoken by Jesus, for in that case we should know that the horror had rolled away and that his God consciousness was once more unclouded. But the "great cry" of Matthew and Mark seems more credible.

We need only mention the remarkable events that are said to have attended the death of Jesus as the star and the chorus of angels marked his birth.

(*a*) Darkness. All the Synoptists say that from noon till 3 o'clock there was a great darkness over all the land. The newly recovered "Gospel of Peter" has the same tradition, and adds that many went about with lanterns thinking it was night. Our own surprise that nature should be blithe and gay when we are sorrowing (Emerson's Threnody) shows us how the legend arose. It is said that the darkness cannot have been due to an eclipse, and therefore, if believed at all, it must be as a supernatural occurrence.

(*b*) The vail of the temple was rent in twain. (Matt. xxvii. 51; Mark xv. 38; Luke xxiii. 45). The Christian idea which probably gave birth to the tradition is given in Hebrews (ix. 11-28; x. 19). The vail was drawn between the Holy Place and the Holy of

Holies and was passed through only once a year, by the High Priest on the day of Atonement.

(*c*) Earthquake (Matt. xxvii. 51). This also was viewed as purely supernatural.

(*d*) The Resurrection of Saints (Matt. xxvii. 53). There is an obscurity in the verse referred to, and it is possible that although the graves were opened by the earthquake, their occupants did not come forth till after the resurrection of Jesus.

(*e*) The Water and Blood (John xix. 34). Death came to Jesus sooner than it did to the malefactors and than was usual in the case of the crucified. To make sure that he was dead one of the soldiers is said to have thrust a spear into his side. The tradition that water and blood followed must be of comparatively late origin, since the two substances are symbols of the water of purification, by baptism, and the blood of redemption.

(*f*) The Centurion, according to all the Synoptists, was so overwhelmed by the extraordinary occurrences he had witnessed that he confessed, "Truly this was a son of God" (Matt. and Mark), or "a righteous man" (Luke).

What is the meaning of the death of Jesus?—Jesus was a martyr to a popular, although mistaken, idea of the Messiah, which he also shared.

It was incumbent upon the first Christians to find a satisfactory explanation for the death of Jesus, since God's permitting Him to be crucified seemed to refute decisively his Messianic claims. The theory that found most favor and that has prevailed in one form or another even to the present time, is based upon the sacrificial idea. But such an explanation must be false, for the notion that God cannot forgive the guilty without exacting penalty from the innocent is repugnant to every sentiment of justice and love and to the best teaching of Jesus himself. Moreover, it robs the death of Jesus of much of its heroic inspiration. When yearly, almost weekly, we hear of some man who bravely dies that he may save others, perhaps unknown to him, from physical death, why should we speak so fulsomely of one who gave up his life, not that a few but that millions might be saved, not from physical death but from inexpressible torments that last forever? The need of an explanation of the death of Jesus was felt because of the prevailing idea that in God's world goodness must be attended by prosperity and length of days. We have outgrown that notion, and hence the difficulty felt at first does not trouble us. Jesus died only as hundreds of other martyrs have died. Had he kept on preaching, he might have suffered violence at the hands of the Pharisees or of Herod, but the Romans would not have been likely to interfere with him. But when he laid hold upon the idea of the Messiah and assumed the authority of the Christ, death became inevitable. But the Messianic idea was only a popular Jewish delusion which he was not able wholly to cast off. He gave up his life because he was heroically, grandly true to a mistaken idea of the Messiah.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Do you know other pictures of the Crucifixion? Have you seen Gerome? Why was this selected? What is the meaning of the skull at the foot of the Cross? What is the inscription over the head of Jesus?

The Death Walk.—What are the legends connected with the way of the Cross (Veronica, The Wandering Jew)? Where was Jesus crucified? What is the meaning of Golgotha?

The Crucifixion.—Give the "Seven Words from the Cross." Are all of them authentic? What is the meaning of the "Eloi"? What marvelous signs accompanied the death of Jesus? What does his death mean to us? "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block"—Why? By what explanation did Paul strive to transform the stumbling-block into a stepping-stone?

LESSON XVII.—The Resurrection of Jesus.

No good thing is failure,
No evil thing success.

—Gannett.

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Picture: Easter Morning, by Plockhorst.

"The Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men that they took down those that were condemned and crucified and buried them before the going down of the sun" (Joseph. Wars, iv. 2). Although it was customary for the Romans to leave the bodies on the cross, they were not unwilling to respect Jewish scruples,

which would be especially strong on the day before the Sabbath, particularly the Sabbath in Passover Week. It is important to observe that all our sources are unanimous in testifying that Jesus was buried not by his avowed disciples, although certain women watched the interment (Matt., Mark, Luke), but by an otherwise unknown friend—Joseph of Arimathæa (Matt. xxviii. 57; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 50; John xix. 38). The burial was hastily done, since it was desirable to have the work over before the beginning of the Sabbath, and it was late in the afternoon before the bodies were taken down. Matthew has an account of a guarding of the tomb, apparently by a Roman guard, which may unhesitatingly be rejected as unhistorical, for the following reason:

(*a*) It presupposes more jealous hostility on the part of the "chief priests and the Pharisees" than we have found actually to exist.

(*b*) It represents the Jews as pleading a prophecy by Jesus regarding his resurrection, of which the disciples appear to have been profoundly ignorant. If one thing is clear in these narratives it is that the disciples had absolutely no idea that Jesus would rise again. Can his enemies have understood him better than his dearest friends who had been with him constantly?

(*c*) The women who came to embalm the body know nothing of any watch about the tomb, but are anxious only lest they may not be able to roll away the stone.

(*d*) The bribing of the soldiers to give testimony which would have exposed them to severe punishment, from which it is incredible that the influence of the Sanhedrin could have secured them, bears evidence against the narrative.

(*e*) It is evident that the story was invented to account for and disprove the popular report that the disciples had stolen away the body. It is obvious, therefore, that this "must be referred to the category of unhistorical legend" (Meyer).

What discovery was made on Sunday morning?—Certain women found the tomb empty, and from this fact the report started that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Upon this point, also, all our authorities agree (Matt. xxviii. 6; Mark xvi. 6; Luke xxiv. 3; John xx. 2). Here then is a fact to be accounted for. The disciples explained it by alleging an actual resurrection from the dead. In support of this hypothesis, the following arguments, among others, have been adduced:

(*a*) The testimony of the disciples that they had actually seen Jesus alive after his crucifixion and burial. Let us, then, examine this testimony and see what it amounts to. For the sake of convenience, we may take the appearances as they are arranged by Robinson in his "*Harmony of the Gospels*," although the order and enumeration are given differently by others.

1. To the women returning from the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 9). Nothing is said about this appearance in Mark and Luke, which relate the visit of the women; and according to John and the (probably) spurious ending of Mark, Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

2. To Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre (John xx. 11–18; Mark xvi. 9). In Mark and Luke other women than the two Marys mentioned by Matthew visit the grave together, and there is not the faintest hint that all do not leave the sepulchre together. According to Matthew Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary while on their way back to the city. John, however, brings Mary alone to the grave, where she has a revelation of the risen Jesus. Obviously our sources are at irreconcilable variance as to the first appearance of Jesus. Such contradictory testimony as this can win little credence. The only way to harmonize the accounts is to say that three or four women came very early to the grave, and finding it empty, all save Mary hastened back to the city to tell the disciples. While Mary was lingering near the sepulchre Jesus appeared to her, and while the other women were on the way to the city Jesus appeared also to them. Does not this, however, seem like an advocate's attempt to reconcile discordant witnesses by slurring points of disagreement?

3. To Peter, perhaps early in the afternoon (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5). According to Luke this must have occurred on the first Easter Sunday, but besides its omission by the other Evangelists, we have to notice that Mark (xvi. 7) distinctly teaches that Jesus was to appear to Peter in Galilee, and Matthew knew of no appear-

ances of Jesus to his disciples save in Galilee (xxviii. 7, 10).

4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13-35; Mark xvi. 12, 13). This is another of the Judæan appearances which Matthew and the genuine Mark, with their Galilee cry, distinctly forbid. Moreover, in Mark the two were not believed by the others, who according to Luke greeted them first with the news of the Lord's resurrection (Luke xxiv. 34).

5. To the Apostles (except Thomas) assembled at evening (John xx. 19-24). Mark and Luke also knew of an appearance by Jesus to his disciples on Easter evening, but to the eleven (Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 33) and not to the ten. Paul says carelessly and with no distinct note of time that he appeared to the twelve, which is a manifest error, since Judas was dead and Matthias had not been chosen in his place (1 Cor. xv. 5).

6. To the apostles, Thomas being present, eight days afterwards at Jerusalem (John xx. 26-28). This assumes that the apostles remained in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, instead of going at once to Galilee, where alone it was promised that they should see him. Furthermore, according to Luke (in the Gospel, but not in the Acts), the ascension of Jesus occurred on the same day with the resurrection.

7. To seven of the apostles on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias (John xxi. 1-22). It is to be observed that of this appearance John says: "This is now *the third time* that Jesus was manifested to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead" (xxi. 14).

8. To the eleven apostles and to five hundred other brethren on a mountain in Galilee. If the two references in Matthew (xxviii. 16) and Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6) are to be combined as they are by Dr. Robinson, whose scheme we have been following, Matthew is certainly at fault in not mentioning the great company of believers. But there is no reason why the two should be combined: Of the five hundred brethren we know absolutely nothing; Matthew speaks only of the eleven, and adds with great significance that even then *some of them doubted* (xxviii. 17). Doubted after all the appearances that have been enumerated!

9. To James (1 Cor. xv. 7). There is no other evidence of this, and Paul is evidently only a hearsay witness.

10. To the eleven in Jerusalem (Acts i. 6-11; 1 Cor. xv. 7). There is, again, no good ground for identifying the two appearances. According to Luke, Jesus parted from his disciples near Jerusalem and ascended into heaven. In Matthew, however, who knows of no Jerusalem appearances to his disciples, the last interview with its "great commission" was on a mountain in Galilee. And, as we have already seen, in the Gospel Luke knows of no interval of forty days between resurrection and ascension, but puts both events on the same day.

From this survey of the evidence certain conclusions appear.

1. Unless we accept the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, we have not a single direct, first-hand witness to the fact of the resurrection.

2. The disagreements in the testimony are so numerous that it cannot overcome the justifiable presumption against the resurrection. It should readily be admitted that perfect agreement among our witnesses would be far more suspicious than the existence of slight discrepancies, but only if the accounts are regarded as purely human in origin. The palpable disagreements pointed out prove that we have to do only with human testimony. Yet there is a natural presumption against the reality of an occurrence which, confessedly, is unique in the history of the world. The burden of proof rests not upon those who deny but upon those who affirm the resurrection of Jesus, and is the evidence given in the four Gospels sufficient to establish such an extraordinary event?

Two other important arguments should be noticed in favor of the resurrection.

1. The Testimony of Paul. It may be that ignorant Galilean fishermen were deceived, it is sometimes said, but Paul was too acute and logical a reasoner, too thorough a scholar, to be deluded. But in answer to this it seems enough to say that Paul's belief in the resurrection was based solely upon the fact that Jesus had appeared to him alive on the Damascus road. But that fact could prove only that Jesus was still alive; and one might easily believe that who denied the resurrection, for immortality does not in the least depend upon resurrection. Granting the reality of Paul's vision, we must still insist that it has absolutely no bearing on the question whether the body of Jesus rose from the grave.

2. The Importance of the doctrine to the Church. It is sometimes alleged that the Christian church was based upon belief in the resurrection, and

that consequently if that belief were vain, the church is based upon a falsehood. But the doctrine of the imminent second advent of Jesus was every whit as prominent in the early church, and we know that that was a pure delusion. It was belief in the resurrection that made the disciples strong. That belief they unquestionably held, but it was the *belief* that was potent. Whether or not a fact lay behind that belief is a question to be decided by the weight of evidence, and not merely by the belief of the disciples.

3. The Fitness of the resurrection in view of the character of Jesus. The uniqueness of the resurrection (so the argument runs) is only what might be expected in view of the unique personality of Jesus. But what ground is there for asserting the supernatural character of Jesus save the supernatural events related of him? This species of argument is reasoning in a circle: Jesus is established by miracles and then Jesus establishes miracles.

It appears, therefore, that the explanation which the disciples gave of the empty tomb is not warranted by the evidence or by other considerations. Is any other hypothesis possible? There are a few scholars who plead for the Reanimation Theory. It is contended that Jesus did not really die, but only swooned on the cross; and that in the tomb he returned to consciousness and arose. Then he went to Galilee, where his disciples actually saw him, but his system had been so shattered by the horrible experiences of Passover Week that he soon died in Galilee. This is very plausible, and it accounts both for the empty tomb and for the legends about his manifestations. The choice would probably lie between this theory and the one next to be mentioned.

In Mark (xvi. 1) and Luke (xxiv. 1) it is said that the women came on Sunday morning, bringing spices with which to anoint the body of Jesus. John, however, relates that Nicodemus brought a hundredweight of myrrh and aloes, and that he and Joseph wrapped the body in linen cloths, with the spices, and buried it (xix. 39). The women, therefore, must have been ignorant of this, else they would not have brought spices for the same purpose on Sunday. But the Synoptists said that the women watched the sepulchre till the body was buried and the stone was rolled before the opening. *Either, therefore, the legend of the anointing in John is entirely unauthentic, or else the body was prepared for its final resting-place by Joseph and Nicodemus between the departure of the women on Friday evening and their return Sunday morning.* May not the order of events have been as follows? The body was hastily laid in a temporary tomb on Friday, since the approach of the Sabbath left no time for the usual anointing. Immediately after the Sabbath, that is after sunset on Saturday, Joseph and Nicodemus came, anointed the body for the grave, and carried it elsewhere for final burial. The women, knowing nothing of this, come in the early morning with their spices, and find the tomb vacant. Perhaps a figure vaguely seen in the dim light of morning was taken for the form of Jesus, but even without this the fact of the empty tomb might of itself be sufficient to give rise to all the rumors of appearance.

It should be mentioned that many critics hold to a vision, or spiritualist, hypothesis,—which accepts the reality of the appearances either as caused subjectively by supernatural will or vouchsafed objectively as the dead are believed to materialize nowadays. Obviously, however, this explanation would not account for the vacant tomb, which seems to be the one established fact in all the narratives.

If it be asked why Joseph and Nicodemus did not disclose the fact of the two-fold burial, several answers may be suggested. They did not belong to the immediate circle of the disciples, and consequently would not hear of the resurrection rumor till the disciples returned from Galilee, whither they had fled and where the belief grew to full proportions. They may not have cared to divulge a fact which would lessen the fame of Jesus, or perhaps they were not believed. It is certainly possible that the report referred to in Matthew (xxviii. 13) is an echo of statements made by Joseph and Nicodemus.

> No good thing is failure,
> No evil thing success.

Yet the life of Jesus, to human vision, had ended in failure. Belief in resurrection carried with it the reversal of the seeming verdict, and proclaimed success. But, although the body of Jesus has long ago become part of the dust of Palestine, he has triumphed by entering upon a larger life and by wielding an influence second to none in the history of the world.

Though he be dead, he is not dead,
Not gone, though fled,
Not lost, though vanished
Though he returns not, and though
He lies and molders low:
In the true creed,
He is yet risen indeed;
Christ is yet risen. (Clough.)

QUESTIONS.

The Burial.—Who took charge of the body of Jesus? Where were the immediate disciples of Jesus? Why was it needful that Jesus should be buried so quickly? Was the burial on Friday night thought to be final or only temporary? What are the arguments against the watching of the tomb?

The Resurrection.—What is the fact to be accounted for? What explanations have been offered? What can be said in favor of the disciples' theory of actual resurrection? "The resurrection of Jesus is the best attested fact in history"—Is this true? How much does Paul's testimony weigh? Between what two theories does the choice probably lie? Does the truth or falsity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus affect the idea of immortality?

LESSON XVIII.—An Invisible Companion.

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Matt. xxviii. 20.

When children are playing alone on the green
In comes the playmate that never was seen,
When children are happy and lonely and good
The Friend of the children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,
His is a picture you never could draw,
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,
When children are happy and playing alone.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Picture: The Unseen Jesus, by Hofmann.

The story of the picture is obvious. The scene is in a German home. The father and the mother, with their three children and the dear old grandmother, are gathered for family prayers. One of the volumes of the big family Bible has been taken from the shelf above the niche in the wall where the crucifix stands, and the father is reading. But, unseen by all, Jesus himself is in the room where two or three are gathered in his name, and with eyes bent upon the baby in the mother's arms stretches out his hands in invisible benediction. Their eyes do not see him, but he is there, and perhaps their hearts are burning within them while the Scriptures are read.

What was the manner of life of the Christians after the death of Jesus?—They walked by faith, not by sight, and endured as seeing him who is invisible.

One of the most beautiful things about the life of the Christians as we find it described in the New Testament is their perfect trust in unseen influences, which were guiding them in perplexity and helping them in need (cf., e. g., Acts xiii. 1-4; xv. 28). Out of the invisible world where Jesus was came intimations in dreams and visions (Acts xvi. 9; xviii. 9), in promptings or restraints (Acts viii. 26; xvi. 6, 7), which were ascribed to the Holy Spirit, to angels, to the continued ministry of Jesus himself. This mental attitude is best expressed by Paul—"We walk by faith, not by sight." For usually in the New Testament faith means an obedient trust in things unseen. Christians were those who had faith in Jesus as the Christ, and during his absence they must keep their faith in him if they would enter his kingdom at the second advent. Moreover, many of the Jews who became Christians were deprived of much that had previously been precious and helpful—the temple with its altar, the priests with spoken assurances of forgiveness and blessing. To meet this need the epistle to the Hebrews was written by an unknown Christian who sought to strengthen belief in an unseen temple, altar, priest, and offerings, which were the realities of which earthly things were only shadows, whose service of faith was better than that of sight in Jerusalem. Naturally this temper of mind was exposed to the very real dangers of other-worldliness to which, as we know, many of the Christians succumbed. Yet it fostered the imagination and so put the church in training for a purer idealism. One of the most distinctive faculties of man is his power to direct his energies toward the attainment of remote results which, as

ideals, govern his life far more than considerations of present utility or apparent benefit. So, even by the delusion of the second advent, the noblest qualities of manhood were exercised.

Can this faith of the primitive Christians mean anything to us? Believing in the indefinite progress of man, we cherish the hope that at some time in the far distant future justice and love will be actually supreme in the world and the spiritual ideals of Jesus be realized in human society. This is our faith in the kingdom of God, based not upon the promise of Jesus but on the history of the world, which stimulates and strengthens. And *if* those who die live on in a world imperceptible by our senses in which Socrates continues his research into true and false knowledge, conversing with Orphæus and Hesiod and Homer, Ajax and Odysseus (Apology §41), then must Jesus be as eager to help men there as he was on the earth. And *if* in ways that the senses know not of, any suggestions of counsel or reassurance can come to men who are in spiritual sympathy with those who live unseen, or on the earth, those who look to Jesus, to the saints, to their friends, for help may receive it. Psychical research opens great possibilities and makes the faith of the Christians much more rational than it appeared a generation ago. *The evidence is yet far from sufficient to warrant an affirmation, but it is more than sufficient to silence unthinking denial.* Nobody can say that this picture does not represent an actual fact; on the other hand, no one has a right now to say that it does. But in a general sense, if not in this particular and personal way, religion has to do chiefly with the imagination, and "to walk by faith" is still the essence of the religious life. A religious man will not excuse himself for wrong-doing by pleading that everybody else acts in the same way, for, as a religious man, he owes allegiance to higher standards of morality than have yet been popularly accepted. He will not be discouraged by the victory of evil for the very heart of his religious belief is the faith that right must triumph in the end. For us, at any rate, religion must be life in the power of things unseen.

What was the early Jewish belief about a future life?—It was believed that at death all passed alike into sheol, an underground cavern, from which all that made life worth living was absent.

The course of Hebrew thought regarding the future cannot be traced with certainty. Yet we may venture to sketch it. According to ancient Semitic ideas there was, under the earth, a vast cavern whither the shades of the dead were gathered (cf. Is. xiv. 9). There all lived a colorless, monotonous existence from which those living on earth prayed to be kept. Long life was fervently desired, death was dreaded because of the nature of sheol. As the Messianic idea enlarged and the dream was indulged of a vast Jewish kingdom dominant in the world, the question arose whether the Jews who had been so unfortunate as to die before the coming of this kingdom were to have no share in its glory. This was answered by the teaching of the resurrection (Dan. xii. 2). All Israelites were to be brought from sheol up to the earth again, but the bad were to be put to shame and punished. Thus there came to be a division in sheol. Those of its inhabitants who were destined to a happy future on the earth were in better case already than the rest. For them sheol was a place of hope, for others there was despair mingled with regret. The colorless cavern has become bright on one side, lurid on the other.

What was the early Christian idea of the future?—The believer who died passed at once into the presence of Jesus and was forever with him sharing his joy.

It does not seem possible to bring all the New Testament writers into agreement on the subject of the future. In the book of Revelation, the picture is very distinct: Satan is bound; the believing dead are raised to live and reign with Christ a thousand years; then Satan is loosed and all the unrighteous forces of the world make war against the beloved city only to be overwhelmed by fire from heaven: then follows a second resurrection and the general judgment, after which all the ungodly, with death and hades (i. e. sheol), are cast into the lake of fire and the righteous who have believed in Christ enter upon their inheritance in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. xx. and xxi.). Paul's thought as to the future marks by its different phases his spiritual growth. Yet two ideas seem to persist through

the various forms: (1) the believer in Jesus went at death to be with his lord (Phil. i. 23) and (2) there was to be a possession of the body by the spirit. The latter idea takes sometimes a very high form: while Paul often speaks of the resurrection as a future event (1 Cor. xv. 52) he also views it as a spiritual experience (Col. iii 1 (?); but the germs of the idea are in Rom. vi. 4, viii. 10, 11, by which the body becomes the friend of the spirit instead of its foe). The thought of Jesus concerning the future is quite obscure: we cannot be certain whether he believed in one resurrection or two, or indeed in any resurrection at all. He did believe, however, in a future life and in an eternal difference between righteous and unrighteous. But while his followers differed widely as to the details of the future not one of them doubted that for them it would be bright and glorious. Hence in the New Testament, never in the Old, the future life conceived of as something to be coveted or dreaded becomes a motive for holy living. Never except in a few of the most exalted utterances of Paul does the New Testament think of a final restoration of all souls to holiness and happiness, but the spirit of the New Testament has made us think of it and the ethical sense which created the idea of eternal punishment is rapidly abolishing it. If there be immortality for all there must ultimately be blessedness for all.

The present significance of the early Christian idea, these Lessons are not to discuss. Certainly what is true of Jesus must be true of all men. If he lives we shall live also; if he is happy those who have lived as he lived will be happy too, and spiritual gravitation may be trusted to bring all such together. For clear thinking, however, it is essential to discriminate between resurrection and immortality: the one implies cessation and renewal of life, the other unbroken continuance. With few exceptions, resurrection holds no place in the minds of modern thinkers, the only question concerns immortality. And granting the reality of future life at all, the questions are these: (a) Is immortality an acquirement or is it native to the soul? (b) Can a soul by continuance in evil-doing destroy itself? Is restoration or annihilation the end of those who continue in selfishness?

If we may not hold the hope of the early Christians so stoutly as they, we are at least free from terror. Whatever may await us in the future must be that which is best for us.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—What Scotch poem does this picture remind you of? What sort of home does this seem to be—rich or poor, peaceful or quarrelsome, happy or sad? Is it Roman Catholic or Protestant? Is there any possibility that the picture represents a fact? Does it illustrate an idea of primitive Christianity?

Faith and Sight.—What is the usual meaning of *faith* in the New Testament? What did walking by faith mean to Paul? What may it mean to us? "When you are in Rome do as the Romans do." Is this ethical? Would Paul have assented to the principle (cf. Rom. xii. 2)? Would Jesus?

The Future Life.—What was the Jewish idea of sheol? Distinguish between resurrection and immortality? How did the idea of resurrection arise among the Jews? How did it react upon the conception of sheol? What is certain about the belief of the Christians concerning the future? What discordant elements were in their thought? To what inconsistencies in the mind of Jesus do these correspond?

LESSON XIX.—The Church Is the Body of the Christ.

Acts iv. 32—v. 11.

When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead.

—Whittier.

—

"I would have a woman as true as Death. At the first real lie which works from the heart outward, she should be tenderly chloroformed into a better world."

—Holmes.

Picture: The Death of Ananias, by Rafael.

The story of the picture is told in the lesson passage. We shall make use of it to illustrate certain characteristics of the early church.

What was an early ideal of the church?—The church was viewed as

only an enlargement of the apostolic band, which, because of the unseen presence still with it and its animation by the spirit that was in Jesus, was called the body of Christ.

One ideal of the Church, found in the New Testament, holds it to be the body of the Christ; the Christ had become incarnate first in Jesus and afterward in the Church. What Jesus did in the world, that the church must do. Its power and its responsibilities were identical with his. "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world!" (John xvii. 18). The Church, according to this idea, is the continuation of the life of Jesus in the world, completing his thought, carrying on his work: it is the reincarnation of the Christ spirit.

Even when this idea had not arisen, the enlarging Church was only the extension of the apostolic company seeking to observe the same manner of life as while Jesus was present in the flesh. He was still with them, though unseen, and all that was done was "in the name of the Lord Jesus" and by his power. With all its narrowness and hide-bound Judaism (of which more subsequently) the Church had a noble idealism in which lay its vitality. Our key to a right understanding of the history of the Jerusalem Church, not to speak of the churches established outside of Palestine, is full recognition of the fact that it was regarded as simply an enlargement of the apostolic company, with Jesus still in the midst.

What were some characteristics of the early church?—As befitting the body of the Christ, it was a church of equality, brotherly honor, purity and power.

(1) *The Church of Equality.* One of the most striking features of the church is its pure democracy. When a successor was to be chosen to Judas, the traitor, he was picked out by lot from two men selected by the entire company (Acts i. 15-26). When "deacons" were to be chosen, it was the whole multitude that chose the seven and brought them before the Apostles for formal recognition by the laying on of hands. Upon the Day of Pentecost, "not on one favored forehead fell" the flame of spiritual power, but upon each of the disciples sat a tongue of fire parting from the central flame in fulfilment, it is said, of the ancient promise, "I will pour forth of my spirit *upon all flesh*" (Acts ii. 1-21). All the disciples were kings and all were priests. The law of Jesus, "He that is greatest among you shall be servant of all," is the soul principle of democracy. There is not a hint of the primacy of Peter; at first, by virtue of his character, he took the lead, but after his baptism of Cornelius he seems to have fallen into disfavor. The Apostles are naturally the leading men in the growing community, but we soon find *presbyters* in existence (Acts xi. 30) who were probably chosen by the entire company of believers and corresponded closely to the modern parish committee. The early church was inspired by the democratic ideal.

(2) *The Church of Brotherly Honor.* There was but one purse among the Apostles while Jesus was with them, and consequently that ideal was recognized, although not fully, by the growing church. Hence we find what looks like a communistic church: the disciples put their possessions into a common fund from which all are supplied alike. But concerning this, four points are to be noted.

(*a*) It was voluntary and not required. This appears very clearly in the passage set for our study (*cf.* v. 4). Moreover, Mary, the mother of Mark, kept her home in Jerusalem (Acts. xii. 12).

(*b*) It was local and not universal. There is no evidence that communism prevailed anywhere except in Jerusalem. Paul did teach that whatever a disciple owned he held in trust for God, to minister to those in need, but he *held it.* Contributions are laid by on the first day of the week (1 Cor. xvi. 2); and in Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus Paul worked with his own hands to earn a livelihood, that no one might charge him with making his preaching a way of gain (1 Thess. ii. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 12-18; 2 Cor. xi. 9; Acts xx. 34).

(*c*) It proved a dismal failure in Jerusalem. One of the requirements laid down by the Council at Jerusalem was that the Gentile Christians should remember the poor (Gal. ii. 10). Particularly on the third missionary journey we find Paul solicitous for the impoverished disciples at Jerusalem, for whom he was making collections in the churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Greece. Communism that is not self-supporting is of course a failure.

(*d*) It was based upon a false belief in the imminent second advent of Jesus. Why should men hold private property, or count it of any value, when Jesus was so soon to return for the purpose of establishing a kingdom of surpassing glory, in which all of the disciples who had given up houses and lands should be more than repaid for their sacrifices? Besides, there was a quick sympathy with those in need — which was so conspicuous in Jesus himself.

Thus the church was a church of brotherly honor: each man trusted his brother and counted his possessions as the common property of all.

(3) *The Church of Purity.* One of the very earliest glimpses of the church that we get from a non-Christian author is in a letter written by Pliny, governor of the Roman province of Pontus—Bithynia, about 112 A. D., to the Emperor Trajan asking instructions about the proper treatment of the Christians who had become so numerous in his province that the temples were deserted, the sacred rites neglected, and certain occupations connected with sacrifices had become unprofitable. In this letter he says that, as he had learned, "The Christians were accustomed to meet on a stated day before light and to sing responsively (?) a hymn to Christ as to a God, and to bind themselves by an oath not indeed for the commission of any crime, but to do no theft, robbery or adultery, not to break faith or refuse to return a deposit when called upon." (Cf. also The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles; The Epistle of Barnabas §§ 18, 19, Ep. to Diognetus §§ 5, 6.) This loftiness of ethical living was one of the best inheritances of the church from the nation in which it arose. The prophets of Israel had taught, as their chief message, the supremacy of righteousness. The picture which we have to-day discloses the strict ethical standard of the primitive church. Ananias had sought to get credit for giving the full price of his possession while he was keeping back part; he had violated the principle of honor among brethren; at the question of Peter he had put his acted lie into words, and the punishment of death came upon him as afterwards for the same offense upon his wife Sapphira. Whether or not the story be true to the fact concerns us very little, there may have been a basis of fact upon which the legend was reared, but the story has far outspread its foundations; what is of importance is the fact that *this story was told and believed in the church.* The very existence of the legend testifies to the ethical sentiment of the church which found nothing incredible in the statement that upon so trivial an offense (as it seems to us) so fearful a retribution followed.

(4) *The Church of Power.* Jesus had no power that was not the property of the church also. The disciples could do miracles of healing and of judgment because he could. All power was theirs because all power had been given over to him. We can hardly overestimate the effect of this belief upon the Christians: it prompted them to undertake tasks from which ordinary men would shrink, it filled them with enthusiastic daring and steadfast endurance. Because they *believed themselves* aided by supernatural power they were strong to undertake and to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

In these distinguishing marks of the church are the signs of its future success. The world had need of a purer ethical standard, based upon the brotherhood of all men, touched with the idealism of an unseen helper, aglow with the hope of a victorious future and presented by men who felt themselves commissioned by God and endowed with supernatural guidance and aid. But as in these characteristics the church was heir to prophetic Israel, so it was not without the heritage of legalism. Before the true Israel of the prophets, of whom Jesus was chief, could be carried to the world, the church had to escape from the body of its death, which was legalism. In our next lesson we shall study the process by which the deliverance was brought about.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—Tell the story as it is given in the Acts of the Apostles. How many Apostles are represented here? Were there any others? Do you suppose that the story is true to fact? Is is true to the sentiment of the church?

The Ideal of the Church.—"The church is the body of the Christ." What did Paul really mean by this thought? Is the church to-day animated by the spirit that was in Jesus? "To be a Christian, one must be a Christ." Is this true? What is the church and what is it for?

The Characteristics of the Church.—Gibbon (Decline and Fall of the Roman

Empire, chap. xv.) mentions five causes for the success of the Christian church; (1) The zeal of the Christians. (2) The doctrine of a future life. (3) Miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. (4) The pure and austere morals of the Christians. (5) The union and discipline of the Christiau republic. How are these illustrated in our lesson to-day?

LESSON XX.—Breaking Home Ties.

Acts vi. 1.-vii. 60.

Foremost and nearest to His throne,
By perfect robes of triumph known,
And likest Him in look and tone,
The holy Stephen kneels
With steadfast gaze, as when the sky
Flew open to his fainting eye,
Which, like a fading lamp, flash'd high,
Seeing what death conceals.
—Keble.

Picture: Stephen Preaching, by Fra Angelico (1387-1455).

What two classes were there of Jews and Jewish Christians? There were Palestinian Jews and Jews of the Dispersion, and the corresponding classes of Hebrew Christians and Hellenistic Christians.

According to some accounts Jesus had bidden the Apostles tarry in Jerusalem *till* the descent by the Holy Spirit and then go throughout all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, but the Apostles showed no signs of leaving Jerusalem, nor did they go into all the world till they were shaken and driven out by persecution. As we find the church shortly after the death of Jesus it is nothing more than a Jewish sect, the one point of difference between Jews and Christians being that the former were still expecting the Messiah, while the latter believed that he had already come in the person of Jesus. The Christians went up to the temple to pray like the rest of their brethren, and their "Christianity" was only an appendage to their Judaism, mechanically added on, not a vital transformation of it. But fortunately there were two parties in the church as there were in contemporary Judaism.

For purposes of trade, and other reasons, many Jews had found homes outside of the Holy Land; we find them in the East, in Egypt, Greece, Italy, and throughout Asia Minor. These emigrant Jews are known as Jews of the Dispersion, and between them and the home-keeping Jews in Palestine there was always more or less friction. Even in Gentile communities, the Jews kept their separateness and observed the laws of Moses, but to heed or even to know the refinements of the Palestinian rabbis was obviously impracticable. Moreover those of the Dispersion were eager to commend their thought and customs to the people among whom they dwelt, and hence there was a natural reluctance to emphasize points of great difference. Besides, with all his rigidity, the Jew has shown always more plasticity than he is usually given credit for: he responds quickly and easily to a sympathetic environment, he absorbs the thought and life with which he comes in touch. Therefore not merely by necessity and accommodation, but also by sympathetic appreciation, the Jews of the Dispersion lost a great deal of the strict Palestinian rigor, and became liberal and tolerant. Now these Hellenists (as they were called) were matched by a liberal party among the home-staying Jews, but the tendency which was stronger and which ultimately prevailed was in the direction of narrowness and insistence upon trifles. The Hebrew Jews distrusted their Hellenistic brethren.

In the church there were representatives from both classes, and they brought with them their old antagonisms and suspicions. It is significant that the first dissension among the disciples in Jerusalem begins as "a murmuring by the Hellenists against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" (Acts vi. 1). It appears that in the communistic community daily supplies were carried to those in need, and it may be that the Hebrew Christians neglected intentionally or thoughtlessly the Hellenists whom they disliked and suspected. Whether the complaints were well founded and the Hebrews were at fault, or whether the Hellenists were unduly exacting, and allowed their resentful watchfulness to exaggerate insignificant omissions,

cannot be determined. In either case, the prompt action of the Apostles was eminently judicious. Calling all the disciples together they laid the case before them and counseled the election of seven men whose chief business should be to attend to this very thing. This is usually taken as a description of the rise of the diaconate in the church, although there is no hint in the narrative that it had any other design than to meet a temporary emergency. The Seven were chosen by the people and brought before the Apostles, who laid their hands upon them, not to impart the Spirit, for one of the qualifications was that the candidates should be *full of the Spirit*, but solely as an official recognition of their appointment by the church. The evidence is not sufficient to justify the frequent assumption that all of the Seven were Hellenists, although it is certain that Stephen and Philip were —the only two of whom we have any subsequent knowledge. *The occasion of the first trouble in the church was "the daily visitation," but its real cause was the latent differences between Hebrew and Hellenistic believers.*

Who were the opponents to the early church?—At first the Sadducees alone opposed the believers, but after the preaching of Stephen the Pharisees also were arrayed against them.

A key to the situation of the church in Jerusalem is the fact that the Pharisees, who in Galilee had been hostile to Jesus, appear now as the friends of his disciples in Jerusalem, while the Sadducees alone are enemies. This shows that the followers of Jesus had not apprehended clearly his real attitude toward Scribism, but were still good Pharisees in all outward observances. The Apostles were not thoughtful, logical men, but had been won to Jesus mainly by his attractive personality, and the bearing of his thought they had not seen, perhaps he himself had not seen, so clearly as the Galilean Pharisees. There was also another reason why the Pharisees were friendly and the Sadducees hostile to the new church. The staple of apostolic preaching was the resurrection of Jesus, and by proclaiming the actuality of one resurrection the Christians were siding with the Pharisees against the Sadducees, "who say there is no resurrection." Nor was it particularly obnoxious to Pharisees that the Christians preached Jesus as the Messiah, for both Christians and Pharisees looked for the Messiah to appear immediately in glory to do the same work, only the Christians believed it would be Jesus returned, the Pharisees that it would be another coming for the first time. Hence it was the Sadducees and not the Pharisees who first made trouble for the church.

But with the preaching of Stephen the Pharisees joined the opposition. Although appointed to serve tables, Stephen did not therefore leave the word of God, but disputed in the synagogue of the Libertines, to which probably Saul also belonged. His teaching was so bold and radical that he was finally brought before the Sanhedrin on the charge of blasphemy.

What was the argument of Stephen's defense?—He showed by a rapid survey of the national history that God's revelation had not been confined to the temple or the holy land, and also that the people had been chronically unable to recognize their God-sent deliverers.

It was the proving of the latter point in a burst of indignant eloquence which brought the speech to an abrupt close, but the significance of the defense lies in the assertion of the needlessness of the temple as a means or condition of revelation. Before Abraham had even set foot in the Holy Land, while Moses was in the wilderness, each had received communications from God. Moreover, God had been most conspicuously with his people in days before the building of the temple, and, of even greater moment, the very temple itself had been condemned as the supposed abiding place of Him who dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Charged with teaching that the temple was to be destroyed and the customs of Moses changed, Stephen retorts that historically the temple had not been in existence during the days of plainest divine help and guidance, and that even Moses himself had been rejected as leader by the nation, even as Jesus had been cast out, of whom Moses had spoken aforetime.

As we read this speech, so sublime in its thought and so adroit in presentation, we feel ourselves in the presence of the same spirit that quickens the gospels. This man has laid hold upon the universal elements of the thought of Jesus, and preaches his constructive creative idea more clearly and logically than Jesus himself had done. The

salvation of Christianity at that moment lay with the Hellenistic members of the Church of Jerusalem, whose spokesman Stephen was. He is one of the ignored prophets of the church, predecessor of Paul, who probably first learned from him the logical implications of the thought of Jesus.

Now, however, the word has been spoken which prophesies the escape of the church from its Jewish leading strings. Stephen alarmed the Pharisees, who joined forces with the Sadducees and began a persecution which resulted in driving out at least the Hellenistic members of the church. This is the first great crisis in ecclesiastical history, for those who were scattered abroad by reason of the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen went everywhere preaching the word. This shows that most if not all of them were Hellenists, and from the fact that the Apostles are said to have remained in Jerusalem it may be that the strict Hebrew Christians were forward in showing that they disapproved of the extreme position of Stephen and so escaped. Stephen seems to have caused the final rupture between Hebrew and Hellenistic Christians: the former stayed in Jerusalem, growing ever nearer to the Pharisaic ideal, the latter went everywhere carrying a faith based upon the universal element in the mind of Jesus, which, under the inspiration and leadership of Paul, conquered the world.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—What two scenes in the life of Stephen are depicted? Who was Stephen? What office did he hold in the church? Who were the primitive "deacons"? Is this story intended to explain the origin of deacons?

Stephen the Hellenist.—Who were the Hellenists? "The Jews in Diaspora [the Dispersion] were real missionaries"—What effect had this upon the internal development and the outward extension of Christianity? Were there, properly speaking, any "Christians" at this time?

Stephen the Prophet.—Give a synopsis of Stephen's speech? What do you think about its authenticity? Would God have been less near to the people after the destruction of the temple than before? How does Stephen's thought stand related to that of James? of Paul? of Jesus himself?

The Hope of the Church.—What were the differences between the first disciples and their Jewish brethren? How does it happen that the Pharisees favor the church? What two parties were there in the church? In which party lay hope for the future?

LESSON XXI.—The Gospel and the Greeks.

Acts xvii. 16-34.

With him, with Zeus are filled
All paths we tread, and all the marts of men;
Filled, too, the sea, and every creek and bay;
And all in all things need we help of Zeus,
For we, too, are his offspring.

—Aratus.

Picture: Paul Preaching in Athens, by Raphael.

By whom was the Gospel carried to the Gentiles?—Chiefly by the Hellenist Christians and principally by Paul, a converted Pharisee, and his followers.

The persecution that followed the death of Stephen is a cardinal event in the history of the Christian church. Its most important results were the dispersion of the Hellenist Christians and the conversion of Paul. Emphasis must be laid again upon the fact that none of The Twelve take the initiative in missionary work outside of Jerusalem. They go out to investigate but not to evangelize. Chief among the traveling preachers was Philip, who is named next after Stephen in the list of deacons, and from whom, in his own house at Cæsarea, Luke gathered much of the material preserved in the third Gospel and the early chapters of Acts. Philip went first to Samaria, and after a successful mission there, which was formally approved by Peter and John, preached in the coast cities of Philistia, after converting an Ethiopian eunuch whom he met on the Gaza road. Shortly afterward, Peter took the daring step of baptizing a Roman

centurion stationed at Cæsarea, and justified his action before the mother-church, which took it ill that a Gentile should be admitted to the church before becoming a Jew, by pleading that he had received a directing vision in Joppa and that in the house of Cornelius the Spirit had fallen upon the centurion and his friends — since baptism was the symbol of the Spirit's baptism, it was only fitting that the symbol should be administered after the occurrence of the thing symbolized. Doubt has often been expressed as to the authenticity of the Peter-Cornelius narrative, but without sufficient reason: Peter and the church may perfectly well have admitted in a particular instance what they would have objected to as a universal principle. But the man was already in prominent view who would preach openly and universally what the Jerusalem church tolerated tacitly and in particular cases— Saul, the Pharisee, foremost among the persecutors.

Of the life of Paul prior to his conversion we know very little. His father was a Pharisee who in some unknown way had obtained the privilege of Roman citizenship. Although born in Tarsus, an important commercial and intellectual center of Southern Asia Minor, Paul was "uncontaminated" by Greek influences, and at an early age was taken to Jerusalem that he might study in the school of Gamaliel. It was he who perceived more plainly than most of his contemporaries, even than the Christians themselves, the logical import of the Christian teaching. If Jesus was really the Messiah, the nation was heinously guilty before God in failing to discern its Christ, and the entire system of Phariseeism was radically untrue. For the people were seeking to fulfill the law that Messiah might come, but if Jesus was the Christ God had sent the deliverer to those who were still in their sins. While they were seeking to win his favor, he had testified that his favor was already theirs. Hence the life-word would be grace and not works of the law, belief in the constant favor (grace) of God unconditioned by strict performance of the requirements of the law. The disciples saw no reason why they could not be good Jews and good Christians at the same time, but Paul saw that the logical outcome of the preaching of Jesus as the Christ would be the destruction of Phariseeism. But if Jesus had been the Christ, God would not have allowed him to die ignominiously upon the cross. Hence "in all good conscience" Paul exerted himself to stamp out the dangerous heresy and became the leading spirit in persecution.

Yet Paul was too ardent, impulsive, emotional to be satisfied with the Phariseeism in which he outstripped his equals in age. His nature was cramped and stifled, there was no appeal to large principles, no incitement to generous ardor; the rites of Judaism could not control his passionate fervor. Characters like his, to which grandeur is so nigh and God so near, cannot be held in the leash of a "Thou shalt not." They must be sent freely afield by duty's clear "Thou must." In other words Paul needed a controlling inspiration, not restraint. The seventh of Romans shows how his nature beat against the bars of the cage in which he was held. Therefore Paul must have seen that in the belief of the Christians, if it were true, there was exactly what he needed, a freedom and enthusiasm which Phariseeism denied him. In Stephen and others whom he was foremost in persecuting, there was a peace which he had never found. Moreover, Paul was an intensely sympathetic man and the sufferings which he caused must have combined with his own inward conflict to raise the question whether after all Jesus was not the Christ. *If he had really been raised from the dead as his followers claimed, then God had declared him the Messiah.* Consequently for Paul everything depended upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. On his way to Damascus, after a toilsome journey, under the noonday glare of an Eastern sun, during which the whole question must have been agitating his mind, almost at the gate of the city, where he had planned to do deeds from which his tender spirit shrank, he had one of those visions, which seem to have occurred frequently in his career and are not unknown nowadays in men of his temperament, in which he actually saw and heard Jesus in the glory of his risen life. *Jesus had been raised from the dead, he was the Messiah, therefore Paul became a Christian.* From the time of his conversion we hear very little of him till he was summoned about ten years afterward from Tarsus to Antioch to take charge of the church in the great Syrian metropolis. Under his leadership the center of activity was transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch and Christianity passed into its universal phase. The disciples were called Christians in Antioch; there they

ceased to be thought of as a Jewish sect and were seen to have a distinctive life deserving a specific name.

What was the substance of Paul's preaching?—He emphasized the resurrection as proving the Messiahship of Jesus, the cross as a new means of reconciliation between God and man apart from the works of the law, the universality and sufficiency of Christianity.

(a) *The Resurrection.*—We have already seen why it was that the resurrection of Jesus assumed its prominent place in the teaching of Paul; without it his preaching was vain and Christianity was a wicked delusion. But because the resurrection was so important, Paul gave little or no thought to the historic Jesus and magnified instead the official Christ. His Epistles tell us nothing about the life of Jesus (except the last scenes of Passover week) and preserve few of his teachings. Wherever there was a church of Paul's founding, it was not the preacher of Nazareth but the risen Messiah that was honored. The effect of this upon the development of Christianity is patent: only recently has the real Jesus, hidden for nearly nineteen centuries, come into view.

(b) *The Cross.*—The disciples were forced to explain the cross; if Jesus were really the Messiah why had God suffered him to die so shamefully? Paul found his answer in the idea of sacrifice. The death of Jesus was not a purposeless incident in the career of Jesus, it was a divinely appointed sacrifice by which all who believed in Jesus were freed from the guilt of sin. So, in the hands of Paul, the death on the mount rose far above the Sermon on the Mount, and the bloody cross was exalted above the Golden Rule. Paul's thought has a legal cast; it is not vital. With him, righteousness means, ordinarily, legal acquittal by God, not, as with Jesus, purity of heart. Paul must bear most of the blame for the forensic character of Christianity. How wide and far he strayed from the simple thought of Jesus will appear if one take the trouble to read at a single sitting Romans v. 1–21 and Luke xv. 11–32.

Yet there was great virtue in this thought of Paul. For if the cross was a new means of reconciliation, then the Law had become needless; Gentiles who believed in Jesus were acquitted before God as fully as if they were Jews who had kept the whole law. The universal reach of sin was matched by the universal offer of reconciliation. As all men, being descended from Adam, were alike guilty before God because of his sin, so all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believed in Jesus entered a stream of righteousness and life flowing from the second Adam. It was by the thought of the cross that Paul was aided to rise above Jewish Christian particularism and become the apostle of the Gentiles.

(c) *The Universality of the Gospel.*—It was only natural that Paul should come into collision with the Jewish Christians, especially with James, the brother of Jesus, who became the leading man in the Jerusalem church and by his extreme devotion to the Law effectually drove out the free and large spirit of Jesus. Paul brought Christianity into the open, made it a living force in the affairs of men. But from one point of view the opponents of Paul were right. Without having its roots in Jewish righteousness, preached by a long line of noble prophets, Christianity was transformed as it came into contact with Greek and Roman thought into something marvelously unlike the ideas of Jesus. As Paul went from place to place, preaching, he imparted much but he acquired more. His preaching to the Greeks was fruitful, but their preaching to him was richer in consequences.

What was the effect upon Christian thought of Greek ideas?—When the Greek met the Gospel then came the Nicene creed.

Our picture shows us Paul preaching to the Athenians. The result of his work in what is for us, next to Jerusalem, the most notable city in the ancient world, was discouraging. Yet when the Gospel actually did come to the Greeks the result was a blending of the two streams, running one from Judea the other from Greece, which gave us the metaphysical Christianity we know so well. The Gospel converted the Greeks, but the Greeks perverted the Gospel. The method of dialectics superseded the insight of Jesus. The Pharisaism of metaphysical subtleties was as fatal as Jewish legalism to the prophetic spirit. Instead of the flower-field of Galilee the world was led to a fanciful text-book of botany.

For a discussion of the passage describing Paul's preaching in Athens

reference may be made to Lesson xxv. of the Lessons on Acts, published by the Unitarian Sunday-school Society. For the Pauline transformation of Christianity see Dr. Cone's "The Gospel and its Earliest Interpretations," and for the Greek transformation, Dr. Hatch's Hibbert Lectures, 1888.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture.—How would Paul feel toward the beautiful temples and statues which he saw in Athens? Where is he preaching? Where was the sermon reported in Acts delivered?

The Gospel of Paul.—What three thoughts are prominent in Paul's preaching? Describe the worth and the danger of each. What was the reflex action of his missionary activity.

The Apostle to the Gentiles.—What is known of the early life of Paul? By what name was he called? Where was he born? Where educated? Why didhe oppose the Christians? Was he conscientious in doing so? Was it right? How was he converted? With what church is his name associated? What is the significance of the name "Christian" as applied to the disciples of Antioch?

The Greek Transformation.—Is the Nicene creed Jewish or Greek? The words of Jesus have come to us only in the Greek tongue—what are the inferences from this fact? Have his thoughts come to us in a Greek dress? In what doctrine did the Greek belief in the immanence of God prevail in the church?

LESSON XXII.—Other New Testament Phases.

O heart of mine, keep patience! Looking forth,
As from the Mount of Vision, I behold,
Pure, just and free, the Church of Christ on earth;
The martyr's dream, the golden age foretold!
And found at last, the mystic Graal I see,
Brimmed with His blessing, pass from lip to lip
In sacred pledge of human fellowship;
And over all the songs of angels hear;
Songs of the love that casteth out all fear;
Songs of the Gospel of Humanity!
Lo! in the midst, with the same look He wore,
Healing and blessing on Genesaret's shore,
Folding together, with the all-tender might
Of His great love, the dark hands and the white,
Stands the Consoler, soothing every pain,
Making all burdens light, and breaking every chain.

—Whittier.

Picture: Christus Consolator, by Ary Scheffer (1795-1858).

This picture illustrates well the artist's love of freedom and sympathy with human suffering The central figure is not an exalted Christ, but the Son of man with the marks of his passion still visible. To him men and women of all ages and classes are looking for consolation and release. An interesting fact about this picture is that in an edition of the prayer-book, published in the North, but intended for circulation principally in the South, which contained it as frontispiece, the figure of the kneeling black slave was omitted [Lowell, essay on the American Tract Society; Whittier, "On a Prayer-book"]. Obviously the constructive thought of the picture is that Jesus is still active in human affairs, helping the world to a purer, freer humanity; and therefore it is an apt introduction to our brief study of the mystical and the Roman interpretations of Christianity, as seen in the New Testament.

What is the mystical interpretation of Christianity?—In the Johannine writings the Eternal Word, which dwelleth by measure in every man, is said to have received perfect and absolute incarnation in the person of Jesus, belief in whom is possible only to those in whom already the Word sufficiently dwells, but whose effect is more complete participation in the Eternal Truth and Life and Love.

In the Johannine books the Christ is regarded as a living, abiding presence in the hearts of those who believe in him. If one may use modern terminology, which does not, however, misrepresent primitive thought, the

Christ is the divine ideal of the universe, which is of course a revelation of the nature of God. That divine ideal without which nothing was made, which is the substance of whatever exists, appeared in its completeness in Jesus, whose mission is therefore to help men understand themselves and realize in themselves and in the universe their highest ideals which are the product of "the Christ" within them. The words of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are not to be conceived of as the utterances of an imperfect human being, the author intends them to be declarations of the Eternal Word, and whatever is said there of and by Jesus may with equal truth be said of and by every man to the degree that "the Christ" spirit is within and the divine ideal is realized in him. Hence the Christ, which is absolutely one with Jesus because perfectly embodied in him, is eternal life and truth, is one with God as a man's thought is one with himself; the progress of the world towards perfection is due to the presence in it of the Christ, which is "the central urge of every atom," and is only the advancing victory of the spirit that was without measure in Jesus. It follows, therefore, that Scheffer's picture is true to the mystical interpretation of Christianity as it appears in the Johannine books; whatever has been done or will be done for freedom, truth, love, the progress of man and the purifying of the world—everything is the work of Jesus the Christ.

It would carry us far beyond the narrow limits of a single lesson even to hint at the causes which brought about this interpretation of Christianity. That it does not at all represent the idea of Jesus may go almost without saying. We have already studied his notion of the Messiah and found it to be totally unlike this. Yet there is a prevailing tendency to disparage unduly the Fourth Gospel. It seems to contain a tradition of facts which is in some respects, though not on the whole, superior to that in the Synoptists, and its speeches preserve intimations of a side of Jesus' mind which is passed over almost in silence by the other evangelists. There undoubtedly was a touch of mysticism in Jesus which most of his followers were quite incapable of appreciating. In the Synoptists it appears in such passages as Matt. xi. 25-30, which have an unmistakably Johannine ring. Without venturing to speak positively, we may say that possibly the Fourth Gospel represents the more mystical teachings of Jesus in the form they came to assume after lying over fifty years in a mind prone to mysticism and subject during the latter part of the time to Alexandrine influence, as those teachings and the historical traditions were understood by a disciple of the apostle. Yet, while the Gospel is precious because it preserves a memory of the mystical side of Jesus, its words do not represent the thoughts of Jesus, and its fundamental conception was entirely foreign to him.

It must not be supposed, moreover, that in the Johannine writings alone of the New Testament books is the mystical interpretation of Christianity found. In Galatians, Paul says, "It is no more I that live, but Christ liveth in me"; the phrase "in Christ," by which he means participation in the stream of righteousness and life issuing from the second Adam as its fountain head, belongs to the same class of thought. And if one wish a modern expression of the idea, which reveals the reality underlying Scheffer's picture, given not by a mystic but by one of the most clear-eyed, sober-minded, unimpassioned of our thinkers, it may be found in the following extract: "What do I say then? That the man goes where his thought goes. Wherever his will bears down obstacles by whatever means, there goes the man. Wherever his wisdom carries light, wherever his fidelity keeps others faithful, or his goodness blesses the world, there lives the man." (Thoughts from the Writings of Rev John C. Learned, p. 35). Now it is true that most of the gains hinted at in our picture which have come to our civilization have been championed by men who drew their inspiration not from the church or a theologic Christ, but from the human Jesus who is said to have proclaimed as his mission "to preach good tidings to the poor,—to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

What is the Roman interpretation of Christianity?—Even in the New Testament are the beginnings of the idea that the church is a firmly compacted organization to which has been intrusted a deposit of truth, to whose officers is intrusted the communication of the spirit and which must be kept free from heresies and heretics.

This may rightfully be called the Roman view, since it emphasizes the

Roman principle of organization. Jesus had no idea of instituting "an external and visible church whose sealing ordinances to the end of time should be baptism and the Lord's Supper," for to him the end of the age was very close at hand. The thought of "organizing" his disciples never entered his mind. In the early stages of Paul's career as a Christian, he, too, believed in the speedy return of Jesus, hence there was no need of a church organization planned to endure. But in the organization of little local communities, there was, apparently, a chief presbyter corresponding nearly to our Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who tended to become the executive officer of the church and who, in the course of time, through the enlarging demands of charity, discipline and missionary zeal, developed into the "bishop." As the position of the churches became more hazardous the members of one church traveling to other cities would seek protection and shelter with the Christians there, hence letters of commendation and a closer brotherhood. Extravagances of doctrine accompanied frequently by immorality led to a closer defining of Christian belief, and this need, together with the dwindling survivors of the age of Jesus and the postponement of the second advent, brought about the formation of written records and the canon of scripture. In a few passages of the Acts we trace belief that the spirit belongs to the church and can be communicated only through the hands of an apostle (viii. 15-17, xix. 6; cf., however, x. 44 and the general notion that the imposition of hands means only formal acknowledgment of the choice of the church). In the Pastoral Epistles there is a nascent ecclesiasticism and there are abundant warnings against heresies and heretics (1 Tim. iii. 15; vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14, etc.). In these epistles, too, *faith* seems to refer not to an attitude of mind but to a body or system of doctrine. It cannot be said that the Pastoral Epistles were written by Paul; nevertheless in his undoubtedly genuine letters are the roots of the subsequent development in the idea of the church as the body of Christ. The result of this unification of the churches was to make the church a potent factor in the politics and civilization of the world. And inasmuch as the changes suggested by the picture we are studying came about ultimately and permanently only as the product of the forces that in society shape gradually and almost imperceptibly towards a higher civilization, we may use the Christus Consolator to illustrate the Roman as well as the mystical interpretation of Christianity, for here Jesus is shown as an actual agent in practical human affairs.

We have thus looked very hastily and superficially at four interpretations of the message of Jesus found in the New Testament. Jesus was a son of the prophetic tendency in Israel; but in Paul the influence of Scribism was strong enough to transform the word of Jesus into a system of legalism remarkably inconsistent with Paul's own condemnation of the Law. Yet in his missionary travels, and particularly during his sojourn in Corinth and Ephesus, Paul certainly grew in the direction of the subsequent Greek transformation, intimations of which appear in his epistles and in the (probably) spurious Letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. In the non-Christian Jewish thought there are clear forerunners of the Johannine ideas, but it was only when Christianity was apperceived by a mind saturated with Greek ideas, and particularly with Alexandrine philosophy, that the thoughts of Jesus the Jew were changed into the metaphysics and mysticism of the Fourth Gospel. And as the churches attained prominence and incurred suspicion they were forced to a more stringent discipline and a closer organization, for which the Roman Empire furnished precedent. The chief object of these lessons has been to show that the thoughts of Jesus did not spring up supernaturally within him, but that he was a consummate representative of the best tendencies of his own time which descended from the prophets of Israel. Similarly his words fell not upon vacant minds, but into minds already formed by systems and principles which strove to adjust the new ideas into their environment with as little friction and disturbance as possible. In next year's course we shall study the development of tendencies whose beginnings we have already found in the New Testament.

For this lesson, the references are to Cone's The Gospel and its Earliest Interpretations and Hatch's Organization of the Early Christian Churches. Matheson's Spiritual Development of St. Paul is also to be commended.

QUESTIONS.

The Picture —Can you find any reason why one man in the picture is shown with his back turned upon Jesus? Try to imagine what Scheffer imagined each one of these persons might find to satisfy his, or her, needs in the words of Jesus.

The Mystical Interpretation.—What did Jesus mean by "the Christ?" What did Paul and "John"? The mystical side of Jesus—is it shown by the Synoptists? Which comes nearest to Jesus, Paul with his doctrine of faith or "John" and his message of love? (1 John iv. 16 and Rom. ii. 23–25.) What elements of mysticism were in Paul? Is there any mysticism in the Old Testament?

The Roman Interpretation.—What is the key-word to this phase of Christianity? Had Jesus an expectation that his followers would organize into a "Holy Catholic Church"? Are there any traces of the idea in Paul? Where is the tendency most apparent in the New Testament?

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Paper, 25 cents, postpaid.

This book is the First Year of the Six Years' Course in "A Study of Religion." The Second Year in the Course will be a work by Mr. Gould on the Growth of Religions, and will be published in 1895.

Western Unitarian Sunday School Society,
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Nature Studies

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II. *Tending the Baby.* 5. Birds; 6. Animals; 7. Insects; 8. Plants.
III. *Setting the Table.* 9. Birds; 10. Monkeys to Spiders; 11. Insects; 12. Plants.
IV. *Clothing the Family.* 13. Birds; 14. Animals; 15. Mollusks; 16. Plants.
V. *Learning to Walk.* 17. In Water; 18. On Land; 19. On Four Feet; 20. On Two Feet.
VI. *Learning to Fly.* 21. Seeds; 22. Insects; 23. Fish to Mammals; 24. Birds and Bats.
VII. *Learning to Help.* 25. Men; 26. Beavers; 27. Termites; 28. Flowers.
VIII. *Learning to Save.* 29. Men; 30. Squirrels; 31. Bees; 32. Plants.
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X. *Sleeping and Waking.* 37. Plants; 38. Animals; 39. Insects; 40. Men.

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